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## NOTES ON ARISTOTELIAN DIALECTIC IN THEOLOGICAL METHOD



### INTRODUCTION

ANY study of the evolution of theological methods must depend upon the contributions of several sciences. Critical texts of ancient and medieval authors are needed. Historians must provide data and illumine the dynamics of each age. Philosophy and the exact sciences must interpret their own histories. And advances in theology itself throw fresh light on past procedures and opinions. Therefore, to study this evolution from specialized points of view is a necessary step if a more total synthesis is to be achieved. In this article we shall try to outline the history of theological method from St. Augustine to Abailard by bringing it into relation with the history of Aristotelian dialectic.

Although this procedure seems a worthy one, it has been largely neglected by scholars. Two reasons for this are readily

apparent. First, serious historical study of theological methods is a relatively undeveloped field. The lack of exact texts and critical tools has hindered its expansion. Secondly, a re-evaluation of Aristotelian dialectic is underway; and until the dialectic itself is better understood, its use as illuminating some other subject matter is limited.

For these and other reasons this study is very modest in intent. We propose to juxtapose some of the data and interpretations provided by historical and theological research with what appear to be the most intelligent and carefully studied views of Aristotelian dialectic. It will be readily seen that much of the material presented here is from secondary sources. Our main aim is to give a general picture of the interaction of two disciplines, as seen in the works of a few important thinkers; and to pose problems in the hope that scholarly effort may be directed to their solutions. The central problem may be stated thus: to what extent has Aristotelian dialectic entered into the methodology of theology. The primary conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that a tremendous amount of research needs to be done. Yet the article will be of some value if it accomplishes only two things: first, indicate a number of particular problems toward which research should be directed; secondly, eliminate to some extent the vagueness and ambiguity which surrounds the word "dialectic" when it is used by theologians and historians of theology.

The article will be in four sections. The first will be an exposition of Aristotelian dialectic. The second will treat of St. Augustine. The third will consist of a few notes upon St. Augustine's immediate successors, the Carolingian renaissance, and the *siècle de fer*. The fourth will be devoted to Abailard. This last part will be the most extended, for indeed Abailard, in one sense, is the subject of the article. As a major influence on theology and as the most famous of the dialecticians of the twelfth century, he is most deserving of study and provides some of the most difficult problems.



## I

Dialectic for Aristotle is both a particular science having its proper subject matter, and a method.<sup>1</sup> As a particular science, it studies syllogisms whose premises are based on opinion and whose middle term is a sign rather than a cause.<sup>2</sup> Thus it can be considered as a branch of formal logic, and does not concern us here. Dialectic as method, however, was of great importance in Aristotle's philosophy. A brief description of this method and of its context will be given. The latter is essential to our purpose, for the dialectic of the Middle Ages was never co-terminous with Aristotle's. In general it included part of Aristotelian dialectic and parts of other methods and sciences.

Dialectic is discussed by Aristotle primarily in the *Organon*. Now the six books of the *Organon* can be considered as in three groups. The *Categories* and the *On Interpretation* treat of the types of concepts (defined in terms of grammatical function in a sentence), the elements of propositions, the problems of quantification, the use of negation (contraries and contradictories), and other such matters. The two *Analytics* contain Aristotle's notion of science and his theory of the syllogism. The latter was called *formal logic*. Finally, the *Topics* and *On Sophistical Refutations* treat of dialectic and fallacious arguments. For Aristotle, then, dialectic is not one of the philosophical sciences (metaphysics, ethics, etc.), not a study of the foundations of logic, not syntactics, and not formal logic. It does bear important relations to these things, and some of these relations will be noted below.

Dialectic is useful for three ends:<sup>3</sup> intellectual training or gymnastic, discussion, and the philosophical sciences. The first end is to make the mind supple, disciplined, and possessed of a

<sup>1</sup> In this controverted subject, we follow generally the lines laid down by J. M. LeBlond in *Logique et Méthode* (Paris: Vrin, 1939). For a short summary in a similar vein, the reader may consult the Introduction to John Burnet's edition of *The Ethics of Aristotle* (Methuen & Co.: London, 1900), pp. XXXIX-XLII.

<sup>2</sup> See H. W. B. Joseph, *An Introduction to Logic*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), pp. 398-400.

<sup>3</sup> *Topics* I 2; 101a, 25 ff.

plan of inquiry about any subject. The second is to enable a man to see questions from different points of view and to argue problems on another's grounds. The third is to supplement the scientific method in the construction of the philosophical sciences. This is done by the posing of apories, that is, by surveying beforehand the end to be attained and the difficulties involved; and by discussion of principles which cannot themselves be demonstrated.

If the material cause be considered, it is clear that dialectic, like the other parts of the *Organon*, is propositional. Its subject matter is not things themselves but propositions about things. Two points must be considered: 1) dialectic is concerned with propositions which are in some sense based on opinion;<sup>4</sup> 2) dialectic has a universal subject matter since propositions can be about anything.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast with the scientific method, dialectic considers propositions which are based on authority of some sort. It is thus a method of utilizing received opinions. However, Aristotle seems to extend the meaning of *ἐνδοξον* to include not only that which is in fact believed, but also that which is believable or conjecturable,<sup>6</sup> and even that which is plausible or likely.<sup>7</sup> Such propositions may be admitted by everyone (*πρότασις*), may be controverted by different wise men (*πρόβλημα*), or may be a statement by some wise man which conflicts with common opinion (*θέσις*).<sup>8</sup> The fact that dialectic deals specifically with propositions which are based on opinion or which at least are not demonstrated, would seem to limit its application. Dialectic, however, is also defined by the generality of its object. Every science indeed has a proper and determined domain—a limited formal object. The dialectical method, on the other hand, is not limited to any genus. "The dialectical argument is not concerned with any definite kind of being, nor does it show anything, nor is it even an argument such as we find in

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I 1; 100b, 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I 1; 100a, 18-21.

<sup>7</sup> *I Analytics* I 1; 24b, 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Topics* VIII 11; 161b, 35.

<sup>8</sup> *Topics* I 10, 11.



the general philosophy of being.”<sup>9</sup> It is as universal as rhetoric.<sup>10</sup> Metaphysics, it is true, treats all being, but its universality is of a different sort. The metaphysician attains generality by abstracting from his experiences of real things.<sup>11</sup> Dialectic does not presuppose specific experiences and does not abstract from them. To what then is it applied? “Every experience, every piece of knowledge is expressed according to the forms of judgment, of reasoning, and these are more or less independent of content. Consequently, the knowledge of these forms can permit one to discuss any subject, without having specialized information. . . .”<sup>12</sup>

Dialectic is thus a formal method. It does not discuss facts or their interpretation as such. The dialectician is familiar with the behavior of language and the ways of predication. “He is a dialectician who examines by the help of a theory of reasoning.”<sup>13</sup> Or again, “He then is a dialectician who regards the common principles with their application to the particular matter at hand.”<sup>14</sup> By applying this knowledge to propositions, he institutes an investigation that influences the statement of facts and interpretations, and therefore influences the knowledge itself of reality. The degree to which dialectic is “real” rather than linguistic will become clearer as its form is considered and its ends discussed at greater length.

The formal note of dialectic is that it is interrogative. The dialectician functions by asking questions,<sup>15</sup> and in so doing reveals the Socratic origins of his method. The things about which the dialectician raises questions are propositions and reasonings. The intellectual instruments he uses are called *organa* and *topoi*.

Aristotle states that there are four elements from which

<sup>9</sup> *Sophistical Refutations* 11; 172a, 12. See also 9; 170a, 34.

<sup>10</sup> *Rhetoric* I 1; 1355b, 8 ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Ethics* VI 8; 1142a, 16 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Le Blond, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> *Soph. Ref.* 11; 172a, 35; see also 171b, 6 ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Soph. Ref.* 11; 171b, 6 ff.

<sup>15</sup> “A dialectical proposition consists in asking something. . . .” *Topics* I 10; 104a 8. The art of asking questions is discussed at length in book VIII of the *Topics*.

propositions are made: definition, genus, property, and accident.<sup>16</sup> The dialectician considers these notions as they appear, say, in a syllogism. For example, by considering the likenesses and differences in two subjects, he can determine whether they belong in the same genus; and this determination is essential to any definition.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, he can apply his notions of identity and the uses of copulative verbs to a given proposition. Again, he can eliminate ambiguities and fallacies by distinguishing the meanings of words, having recourse here to grammatical forms, to contraries, and so forth.

Of the various sorts of reasoning in dialectic the most important is induction. Induction can indeed be put into syllogistic form (if it is complete), but that is the only sense in which it belongs to formal logic.<sup>18</sup> Induction is a method of reaching principles, which by their very nature cannot be demonstrated. Whether complete or not, induction can lead to a universal.<sup>19</sup> Besides induction the dialectician should have at his command arguments from similarities and differences.<sup>20</sup>

Aristotle discusses four *organa*:<sup>21</sup> 1) to choose propositions well; 2) to distinguish different senses in a word (this assures that people talk about the same thing); 3) to find the differences of things (such distinctions lead to a clearer knowledge of essences); and 4) to observe and investigate likenesses (necessary for analogies and definitions). The *topoi*<sup>22</sup> appear to be simply more particular *organa*. They include such distinctions as past and future, whole and part, universal and particular, possible and impossible.

The first of the ends of dialectic mentioned above requires no further discussion. The skills developed by dialectical training are obviously required for any serious intellectual effort. The second end, conversation, is also evident. To discuss a problem with someone, one must find a common subject mat-

<sup>16</sup> *Topics* I 4.

<sup>17</sup> See *Topics* I 18; 108b, 9-29.

<sup>18</sup> See Le Blond, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-8.

<sup>19</sup> See *Topics* VIII 8; 160b, 3.

<sup>20</sup> See *Topics* I 17 and 18.

<sup>21</sup> In the last five chapters of bk. I of the *Topics*.

<sup>22</sup> These are discussed in the *Topics* from bk. II to bk. VII.



ter, use opinions, make comparisons, shift the grounds of the argument, verify the other person's statements, and detect and refute fallacies. This last rather negative aspect receives considerable treatment in the last two books of the *Organon*.

Although the reader of Aristotle can get the impression that dialectic is concerned solely with these two ends,<sup>23</sup> it is clear from other texts and from Aristotle's actual use of dialectic that the third end—helping science—is of great importance. From this point of view dialectic is a method of inquiry which leads to knowledge about "*res*," not just "*verba*." There are two aspects to this: the posing of apories, and the discussion of principles. Aristotle states forcefully in the *Metaphysics* the role of apories:

We must, with a view to the science which we are seeking, first recount the subjects that should be first discussed. These include both the other opinions that some have held on the first principles, and any point besides these that happens to have been overlooked. For those who wish to get clear of difficulties, it is advantageous to discuss the difficulties well; for the subsequent free play of thought implies the solution of the previous difficulties, and it is not possible to untie a knot of which one does not know. But the difficulty of our thinking points to a "knot" in the object; for insofar as our thought is in difficulties, it is in like case with those who are bound; for in either case it is impossible to go forward. Hence one should have surveyed all the difficulties beforehand, both for the purposes we have stated and because people who inquire without first stating the difficulties are like those who do not know where they have to go; besides, a man does not otherwise know even whether he has at any given time found what he is looking for or not; for the end is not clear to such a man, while to him who has first discussed the difficulties it is clear. Further, he who has heard all the contending arguments, as if they were the parties to a case, must be in a better position for judging.<sup>24</sup>

The following passage in the *Topics* declares unequivocally the use of dialectic in the discussion of principles:

<sup>23</sup> For example, *Soph. Ref.* 11; 172a, 12 ff; "No art that is a method of showing the nature of anything proceeds by asking questions." Le Blond, in the work already cited, pp. 24 f, remarks that dialectic is not infrequently used in the narrower sense of *πειραστικός*.

<sup>24</sup> *Metaphysics* III 1; 995a, 23—995b, 3.

[Dialectic] has a further use in relation to the ultimate bases of the principles used in the several sciences. For it is impossible to discuss them at all from the principles proper to the particular science at hand, seeing that the principles are the *prius* of everything else: it is through the opinions generally held on the particular points that these have to be discussed, and this task belongs properly, or most appropriately, to dialectic: for dialectic is a process of criticism wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries.<sup>25</sup>

Dialectic is never a method of demonstration, but in the processes just mentioned it appears as co-ordinate with the scientific method. The premises of scientific reasoning are themselves indemonstrable, as are all definitions introduced. Any discussion of these must be dialectical in character. Aristotle did not discuss at any length the theory behind this aspect of dialectic, and philosophers since then have often misunderstood it, ignored its presence or simply rejected it.<sup>26</sup>

## II

Having ascertained in a general way the meaning of dialectic for Aristotle, we may now proceed to inquire as to its presence in theological method, beginning with St. Augustine. St. Augustine is of particular importance in the evolution of theological method: he summed up the predominant attitudes of early Christian thinkers, he consciously organized these attitudes into a coherent system, his works—found in numberless medieval libraries—provided later Christians with content and method, and he was recognized as the outstanding authority with regard to Christian intellectual activity. St. Augustine's quasi-official

<sup>25</sup> *Topics* I 2; 101a, 36—101b, 4.

<sup>26</sup> The following passage of Cicero in Boethius' *In Topica Ciceronis Commentaria* (PL LXIV, 1044 C) indicates that the Stoics ignored dialectic, and suggests one source of the confusion about the word's meaning. "Cum omnis ratio diligens disserendi duas habeat partes, unam inveniendi, alteram iudicandi, utriusque princeps, ut mihi quidem videtur, Aristoteles fuit. Stoici autem in altera elaboraverunt. Iudicandi enim viam diligenter persecuti sunt, eam scientiam, quam dialecticem appellant. Inveniendi vero artem quae Topicae dicitur, quae ad usum potior erat, et ordine naturae certe prior, totam reliquerunt."



determination of methods and of the place of learning in Christian life continued unimpaired until the twelfth century. There was continuous change during this period, of course, but it was evolution within a fixed framework. The first radical and influential departures from this tradition came in the twelfth century.

The Augustinian rationale of secular and profane learning was organized around the very basic distinction between faith and beatitude. Christian life begins with faith; and it is faith which characterizes life on earth. After death comes the reward of faith—beatitude. This temporal pattern is paralleled in the life of the soul: first come the shadowy knowledge of faith, and the love that is never fulfilled; then, at last in Heaven, the full enjoyment of truth and goodness—beatitude. The transition from the one to the other consists in the increasing of love and knowledge, starting from faith and using human faculties aided by grace. This transitional affective knowledge is called wisdom or understanding insofar as its object is God, science insofar as its object is created things.<sup>27</sup> The latter is a means to the former. The focus of intellectual activity is Sacred Scripture: "Furthermore, a man speaks more or less wisely as he has made more or less progress in the Holy Scripture . . . in a thorough understanding and careful searching into their meaning."<sup>28</sup> Secular learning contributes to the understanding of Scripture and that is its justification. Meditation on the mysteries revealed in Scripture brings the Christian to understanding or wisdom.

Three points should be noted in particular. First, the distinction between faith and understanding.<sup>29</sup> Faith is based on

<sup>27</sup> *Distat tamen ab aeternorum contemplatione actio qua bene utimur temporalibus rebus, et illa sapientiae, haec scientiae deputetur.* *De Trinitate* XII, 14 (22); *PL* XLII, 1009. For a list of the various meanings of "scientia" and "sapientia," see Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris: de Boccard, 1938), Appendice, Note B, pp. 561-69.

<sup>28</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana*, IV, c. 5.

<sup>29</sup> "Nisi enim aliud esset credere, et aliud intelligere, et primo credendum esset, quod magnum et divinum intelligere cuperemus, frustra Propheta dixisset 'Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis.'" *De Libero Arbitrio*, II, c. 2.

revelation which is found in Scripture. Understanding comes from man's efforts aided by the illumination of grace. Faith is the beginning; understanding is progress toward the end and presupposes faith. Faith is certain, while understanding can degenerate into vain reasoning.

Secondly, it is clear that "theology" for St. Augustine was little like the thoroughly rationalized science that it became in later centuries. The attempt to know God and his works was centered on Scripture. "Theology" consisted in trying to penetrate the Christian mysteries by exegesis and contemplation. Knowledge itself was not the real end, but that knowledge which led to greater charity.

Thirdly, study of the secular sciences had no *raison d'être* in itself, but served as a preparation for the pondering of Scripture.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the subject matter of any of these sciences was completely controlled by the Christian's personal intent. Love was the final end, and knowledge existed to feed love. Once a science had assisted the scholar in reading Scripture, it held little further value. Such a view, of course, was not likely to lead to any radical developments in the subordinate sciences. This indeed constituted one kind of Christian synthesis, but it was achieved by attributing relatively little value to the secular sciences,<sup>31</sup> except insofar as they contributed to religious thought.<sup>32</sup>

The organization of secular learning by Varro, Capella and

<sup>30</sup> On grammar, for example, see *De Doctrina Christiana*, III, c. 29: "Quos tamen tropos qui noverint, agnoscunt in litteris sanctis, eorumque scientia, ad eas intelligendas aliquantum adjuvantur." Similar passages could be found for each of the seven arts.

<sup>31</sup> Sometimes St. Augustine seems to see no value in them at all. For example, he says à propos of Scripture: "Nam quidquid homo extra didicerit, si noxium est, ibi damnatur; si utile est, ibi invenitur." (*De Doctrina Christiana* II, c. 42). We presume this is partly rhetorical exaggeration, and partly a way of expressing the all-sufficiency of Scripture with regard to man's final end.

<sup>32</sup> This common interpretation of St. Augustine can be found more fully explained in the work of Marrou cited above. "... il veut une culture étroitement et directement subordonnée au christianisme; toutes les manifestations de la vie intellectuelle doivent être au service de la vie religieuse, n'être qu'une fonction de celle-ci." (p. 339).



Cassiodorus into the seven arts is too familiar to need any description. Augustine proposed it anew.<sup>33</sup> The cultivation of the seven arts became one of the two great determinants of the evolution of theological method;<sup>34</sup> and throughout the entire period under consideration it was St. Augustine who provided its justification and much of its material. Of special importance to this essay is the meaning that St. Augustine gave to the art called "*dialectica*."<sup>35</sup> It was by no means identical with Aristotle's dialectic. Not until the thirteenth century did the term begin to resume, for some thinkers at least, its strict Aristotelian sense. We need to see, then, what Augustine's dialectic included and how it was used in sacred studies.

Generally speaking, dialectic included the grammatical and logical matters dealt with in the *Categories* and *On Interpretation*, some traditional formal logic<sup>36</sup> (partly from the Peripatetic school and partly from the Stoic-Megarian school), and some of Aristotle's dialectic. In other words Aristotle's distinctions had become blurred and various elements of logic and method were grouped together. Marrou has pointed out this composite character of St. Augustine's dialectic. "His dialectic presents a double aspect; a) as in Stoic usage, it is the science of that method by which science is made . . . the study of the laws which rule the activity of reason, in a word, logic; b) but as with Aristotle, it is also the science of discussion, no longer theoretic but practical; the art of convincing or confounding an adversary."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> The seven arts and their use in relation to Scripture are discussed at length in bk. II of *De Doctrina Christiana*.

<sup>34</sup> See J. de Ghellinck S.J., *Le mouvement théologique du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1948), pp. 16 f.

<sup>35</sup> For a justification of dialectic, see *De Doctrina Christiana* II, c. 35: "Item scientia definiendi, dividendi atque partiendi, quamquam etiam rebus falsis adhibeatur, ipsa tamen falsa non est, neque ab hominibus instituta, sed in rerum ratione comperta." For a discussion of the Platonic aspects of Augustine's dialectic, see Jean Pepin, "Univers dionysien et univers augustinien" in *Aspects de la dialectique*, *Recherches de Philosophie* II (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1956), pp. 179-225.

<sup>36</sup> "Hanc enim artem quam dialecticam vocant, quae nihil aliud docet quam consequentia demonstrare . . ." (*Contra Cresconium* I, 20 (25)).

<sup>37</sup> Marrou, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

St. Augustine was not a scholar in the fields of logic and dialectic,<sup>38</sup> but these sciences and methods are, of course, widely used. In particular, Aristotelian dialectic appears not infrequently. This method, as noted above, has three ends: intellectual exercise, conversation, and as a help to science. With respect to the first end, St. Augustine uses dialectic as a means of elevating his readers to that level necessary for the consideration of divine things. "Dialectic was a means of disciplining the reader in the management of ideas, of abstract arguments, of getting him accustomed little by little to the technique of metaphysical research."<sup>39</sup> For example, in the *De Trinitate* his general method (and this itself is Aristotelian dialectic)<sup>40</sup> is to consider a number of images to discover which of them are fit to express in some way the Trinity. Having found the best image, he surprises the modern reader by returning (from bk. IX to bk. XIV) to the images already rejected. Later he explains that he did this in order to exercise and purify the reader's mind, and so make it capable of grasping the sublime doctrine being presented.<sup>41</sup>

The second end—discussion—finds its fulfillment in polemic and apologetic.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, one of the most famous definitions of dialectic was attributed to St. Augustine: *Dialectica est bene disputandi scientia*.<sup>43</sup> He was perfectly frank about such a use of dialectic. This is illustrated in a lively way by the following passage written against Cresconius:

"What is dialectic but skill in disputation? . . . yet you reproach

<sup>38</sup> "Tous les exposés de logique théoretique qu'on rencontre chez Augustin frappent le lecteur par leur caractère élémentaire et leur tour assez peu technique." (*Ibid.*, pp. 244-5)

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>40</sup> See *Topics* I 17, 18 on analogy, especially 108 a, 6 ff: "Likeness should be studied, first, in the case of things belonging to different genera, the formula being A : B = C : D."

<sup>41</sup> "... dilata est de Trinitate . . . disputatio, ut in ipsis etiam corporalibus visis inveniretur trinitas, et distinctius in ea lectoris exerceretur intentio." (*De Trinitate* XV, 3 (5); *PL* XXXII, 1060)

<sup>42</sup> For a bibliography on dialectic as polemic see Ghellinck, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>43</sup> *De Dialectica* 1; *PL* XXXII, 1309.



dialectic in me, that you might lead astray those unskilled in it, and praise those who would not enter into dispute with me. But are you not using dialectic when you write against us? . . . Looking over the very work you sent me, I see that you explain certain things artfully and at length—that is, eloquently—and that you discourse upon certain things with cleverness and subtility—that is dialectically—and yet you bemoan my use of eloquence and dialectic.”<sup>44</sup>

As pointed out above, this dialectic of St. Augustine is rather heterogeneous in character. In some places, however, one finds him using dialectic in precisely the Aristotelian sense.<sup>45</sup>

As regards dialectic as a positive method of inquiry, applied to a subject matter for the sake of discovery, not a great deal of it is to be found in St. Augustine. One cause for this was obscurity about the nature of dialectic, and the lack of Aristotelian texts precluded improvement. Another cause—one of equal importance—was the very nature of sacred studies. The Christian thinker was confronted with mysteries, and hence it was impossible for him to have “surveyed all the difficulties beforehand.”<sup>46</sup> There was no question of discovering fundamental notions or principles—those were given in revelation. The possibility of deepening knowledge was recognized, but it was done primarily by comparison of texts. The only important exception to this in St. Augustine appears to be his investigations in the second part of *De Trinitate*. There dialectic plays its most creative role. “It is no longer a preliminary exercise, a research useful for its effects upon the mind. It becomes fruitful of itself and is nothing else but the very law of re-

<sup>44</sup> *Contra Cresconium* 1, 13 (16).

<sup>45</sup> Compare the following passages (from Aristotle and Augustine) à propos the convertibility of definitions: “Whereas if any part of the expression do not apply to everything that falls under the same species, it is possible that the expression as a whole should be peculiar; for it will not be predicated convertibly with the object . . .” (*Topics* VI 3; 140 b, 21); “Si enim me rogares quid esset homo, et eum hoc modo definirem, Homo est animal mortale: non continuo quia verum dictum est, etiam definitionem probare deberes, sed superposita ei particula, id est, omnis, convertere illam et intueri, utrum etiam conversa vera esset. . .” (*De Quantitate Animae*, 25 (47); *PL* XXXII, 1062).

<sup>46</sup> *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, III 1; 995 a, 32.

search; it is the very movement of the depths of the soul, going forward to the gradual discovery of truth.”<sup>47</sup>

### III

Between the time of St. Augustine and the beginning of the Carolingian renaissance there are only two figures that need be considered here: Boethius and Cassiodorus. Like St. Augustine's, their works were widely disseminated and extremely influential. Boethius is of interest here because of his logical works and translations which were available before the thirteenth century. A list of these is most informative: two commentaries on the *Isagoge*; a translation of *De Interpretatione* with two commentaries; a translation and commentary on the *Categories*; an unfinished commentary on Cicero's *Topics*; three original works on syllogisms; *De Divisione* and the treatise *De Differentiis Topicis*. One notices immediately that four books of the *Organon* are missing. Apparently Boethius's translations of them were lost soon after his death. The closest thing to Aristotle's work on dialectic was the partial work on Cicero's *Topics*. Like Cicero, Boethius saw dialectic as a mixture of formal logic and the science of probable arguments, yet placed at times very close to rhetoric.<sup>48</sup>

Cassiodorus furthered still more the influence of St. Augustine.<sup>49</sup> The work of theology was again said to be the penetration of Scripture. “Happy is the soul who with God's help has stored up in memory the secret of this great gift; but happier

<sup>47</sup> Marrou, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

<sup>48</sup> We have not succeeded in determining this question more precisely. The following quotations will give an idea of the complex nature of dialectic according to Boethius and Cicero. “. . . disputandi ratio et loquendi dialecticorum sit, oratorum autem dicendi et ornandi.” (Cicero's *Orator*, 32, 13). “Patet igitur in quo philosophus ab oratore ac dialectico in propria consideratione dissideat: in eo scilicet quod illis probabilitatem, huic veritatem constat esse propositam.” (Boethius's *De Differentiis Topicis*, I, I; PL LXIV, 1181 B—1182 A). “Quamque eodem nomine [dialectica] Aristoteles, non totam disserendi artem, ut Stoici, sed eam tantum nuncupet quae de proposita quaestione verisimilibus colligat argumentis. . . .” (Boethius's *In Topica Ciceronis Commentaria*, PL LXIV, 1047 C)

<sup>49</sup> For a list of references to Augustine, see Marrou *op. cit.*, p. 212, n. 5.



still, he who has discovered the paths of its meanings.”<sup>50</sup> For example, in his most celebrated work, the *Institutiones*, his purpose in writing it was, according to van de Vyver, to furnish his monks the bibliography and the means of their deepening their study of Scripture.<sup>51</sup> The works written by the monks at Vivarium were with very few exceptions commentaries on the sacred text and translations of older commentaries and homilies.<sup>52</sup> In other words, the material of theology was scriptural and patristic texts.<sup>53</sup>

The preparation for Scriptural study consisted in the seven arts. “It should be noted that both in Sacred Scripture and in learned expositions much can be learned through schemata, definitions, the art of grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic and astronomy.”<sup>54</sup>

For Cassiodorus the art called “*dialectica*” was an instrument for disputation<sup>55</sup> and the study of the syllogism—that is, formal logic.<sup>56</sup> Dialectic, then, was one of the instruments used in the study of Scripture, but more specifically in the propounding and upholding of Christian doctrine. Scripture itself determined theological study, while dialectic was merely useful. In view of the tremendous popularity of Cassiodorus in the following centuries, one is not surprised to see these ideas reappear with great frequency.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum*, Praef.; PL LXX, 1107 C.

<sup>51</sup> “Cassiodore et son oeuvre,” *Speculum*, VI (1931), 272.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 264-271.

<sup>53</sup> “In quibus [sacris litteris] non propriam doctrinam sed priscorum dicta commendo, quae posteris laudare fas est, et praedicare gloriosum.” (*De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum*, PL LXX, 1107 A)

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 1140 D.

<sup>55</sup> “. . . [dialectica], quantum magistri saeculares dicunt disputationibus subtilissimis ac brevibus vera sequestrat a falsis.” (*De Artibus ac Disciplinis Liberalium Litterarum*, Praef.; PL LXX, 1151 D)

<sup>56</sup> “Nunc ad logicam, quae et dialectica dicitur . . .” (*Ibid.*, 1167 B); “Sed priusquam de syllogismis dicamus, ubi totius dialecticae utilitas et virtus ostenditur. . . .” (*Ibid.*, 1168 B)

<sup>57</sup> For a list of authors who quoted him, and of libraries which we know listed his works, see L. W. Jones, “The Influence of Cassiodorus on Medieval Culture,” *Speculum*, XX (1945), 433-442.

The century and a half that followed Cassiodorus were so barren intellectually that they can safely be passed over. The Carolingian renaissance, however, is generally recognized to be of great importance in the evolution of theology. This is not because there were any striking innovations in method or changes of principles or subject matter, but because of the revitalization of intellectual life in general. Charles Martel had seen fit to pillage the abbeys. Charles the Great promoted ecclesiastical establishments, founded schools, had texts copied, issued capitularies regulating these and other things, and in general caused a great increase in intellectual vitality. Theology, however, remained essentially what it had been in St. Augustine's time. "There are scarcely any documents which would permit us to assign any other end to the theological instruction of this epoch than the enlightened reading of the Bible, of the works of several of the Fathers, of liturgical rites and prayers."<sup>58</sup> This fact is mirrored in the controversies of the time—on grace and predestination, adoptionism, the cult of images and the *filioque*—which were carried on not by speculations on the problems but by endless references to the *auctores*, culled mainly from the florilegia. Secular studies followed the lines laid out in the *De Doctrina Christiana*. The seven arts were justified as the proper preparation for the sacred text.<sup>59</sup> Some of them were in addition very useful for certain ecclesiastical functions, like plain chant and computation of feasts.<sup>60</sup>

The seven arts were not given equal treatment. In general the quadrivium received less attention than the trivium, especially in the monastic schools.<sup>61</sup> Again, in the trivium, it was grammar that was emphasized. It was this *discipline textuelle*

<sup>58</sup> Ghellinck, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> "Le but assigné à l'étude de la grammaire et des arts liberaux est tout entier subordonné à l'intelligence de la Bible. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 19)

<sup>60</sup> Carolingian legislation demanded a knowledge of these. See *MGH, Capitularia*, I, n. 116, VIII, and n. 117, V; p. 235, p. 237.

<sup>61</sup> See Dom Philibert Schmitz, *Histoire de l'ordre de Saint Benoît* (Maredsous, 1942), II, 59.



which gave new impetus to sacred studies in the Carolingian period. On the one hand, grammar was cultivated as a preparation for the two primary monastic activities: the *opus Dei* and the *lectio divina*; on the other, grammar provided a technique that helped to understand the Bible<sup>62</sup> and thus, at least in the cathedral schools,<sup>63</sup> pave the way for a discussion of content. Dialectic is of relatively little importance for most of the Carolingian period. Indeed, we know of places—York, for example; in the time of Alcuin—where it was not even taught.<sup>64</sup> From Alcuin until Abailard the use of dialectic was only occasional.<sup>65</sup> Under the term dialectic was included principally material found in the *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*, but also the traditional treatment of syllogisms.<sup>66</sup>

If little is said here about the tenth and eleventh centuries, it is not because they were entirely static. Economically, politically and socially they were times of tremendous change. Yet in theology and in dialectic one finds nothing, with the possible exception of St. Anselm, that was original and of real influence on succeeding ages. While St. Anselm was indeed important in some ways, he appears to have had little influence on the development of theological method. No attempt is made here to determine more precisely what influence he did have.

Ghellingck has found little or no difference between the theology of this period and of the periods described above. "Theology remained what it had been: the intelligent reading of the Bible and of some of the Fathers, the knowledge of symbols, canons and ceremonies. Outside of the schools at least, it appeared only in the form of an immediate practical preparation for sacred functions."<sup>67</sup> The literary productions of the times were mainly glosses, books of sentences (i. e., patristic

<sup>62</sup> For the use of *tropi* etc. see *MGH, Leges, Capitularia*, t. 1, p. 79.

<sup>63</sup> For a fuller statement of this contrast, see Dom Jean Leclercq, "L'humanisme bénédictin du VIII<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Analecta Monastica*, Première série, *Studia Anselmiana*, 20 (1948), pp. 8, 14-15.

<sup>64</sup> See Schmitz, *loc. cit.*

<sup>65</sup> See *DTC*, "Théologie," XV, 360.

<sup>66</sup> For example, see Alcuin's *De Dialectica*, *PL* CI, 951 ff.

<sup>67</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

dicta, on religious topics, culled from the florilegia), commentaries on Scripture, and toward the end of the eleventh century, some monographic treatises on particular theological subjects.

We may note two things of some significance. First, with regard to the seven arts, practice deviated somewhat from theory. The program of the arts was indeed flourishing, but not equal attention was given to each of the elements.<sup>68</sup> Thus, for example, at the cathedral school of Rheims in the eleventh century little or no attention was paid to the quadrivium, with the exception of music.<sup>69</sup> Secondly, dialectic was becoming more important as a theological instrument, if only in terms of polemic. The term still means of course that collection of logical doctrines traditional for many centuries. Berengarius was responsible for much of the controversy of the time, for his attitude toward dialectic was distinctly rationalistic. "It is a sign of great intelligence to rely upon dialectic in all things; for he who does not, since he is made in the image of God with respect to his reason, relinquishes this honor. . . ." <sup>70</sup> Lanfranc, though up in arms against Berengarius, took a moderate view of dialectic. "For those who consider it carefully, dialectic does not impugn the mysteries of God, but when there is need it supports and strengthens them if rightly used." <sup>71</sup> The net result of this increased use of dialectic was a growing tension between those who would apply it more extensively and those who restrict its use to the more traditional functions.

#### IV

A few remarks about the tension indicated above will serve as an introduction to this last section on Abailard's use of dialectic in his theological method. For to come to grips with the questions later discussed one must keep clearly in mind the

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40 ff.

<sup>69</sup> See John R. Williams, "The Cathedral School of Rheims in the Eleventh Century," *Speculum*, XXIX (1954), 661-677.

<sup>70</sup> *Sacra Coena*, ed. Vischer (Berlin, 1834), p. 101.

<sup>71</sup> *Glossa in Epistolam Pauli*, PL CL, 157 C.



condition of dialectic in the twelfth century; that is, its place in the educational system and its content.

As pointed out above, dialectic received more and more attention during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In theory the complete cycle of the seven arts remained the educational ideal, but in practice various arts were not taught, nor was the order of instruction always the same.<sup>72</sup> In theory the arts were still grouped around and subordinated to sacred studies,<sup>73</sup> but in practice there was a growing independence in their cultivation. The arts were maturing, new materials were beginning to flow into Europe from the Arabs, and the educational system as a fixed synthesis was irrevocably shattered. The results were specialization and rivalry. Dialectic was often cultivated without the proper foundation in grammar and rhetoric and without any intention of subordinating it as an instrument to be used in the *artes reales*. Such a procedure was, according to William of Conches, "to be always sharpening the sword, but never using it in battle."<sup>74</sup> There was rivalry not only between the quadrivium and the trivium; but also between grammar and rhetoric on the one hand, and dialectic on the other. Although dialectic held the center of the stage, in not a few schools relatively little attention was paid to it.<sup>75</sup> Specialization in dialectic and the other arts led to difficulties in communication. Thus, for example, when Abailard complained that St. Bernard did

<sup>72</sup> For some examples see Paré, Brunet, Tremblay, *La Renaissance du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Ottawa: Institute d'études médiévales, 1933), p. 102. For England in particular, see David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1940), p. 495 ff.

<sup>73</sup> "Constat quod omnes artes naturales divinae scientiae famulantur, et inferior sapientia recte ordinata ad superiorem conducit. Sub eo igitur sensu qui est in significatione vocum ad res, continetur historia; cui famulantur tres scientiae sicut dictum est, id est grammatica, dialectica, rhetorica. Sub eo autem sensu qui est in significatione rerum ad facta mystica, continetur allegoria. Et sub eo sensu qui est in significatione rerum ad facienda mystica, continetur tropologia; et his duobus famulantur arithmetica, musica, geometria, astronomia et physica." Hugh of St Victor, *De Sacramentis*, Prologus, c. 6.

<sup>74</sup> *De Philosophia Mundi*, Prologus.

<sup>75</sup> "Of the seven traditional branches of the old curriculum, Dialectic, the third member of the Trivium, had little place in the monasteries compared with that which it was beginning to hold in the schools and nascent universities. . . ." (Knowles, *op. cit.*, p. 497)

not understand the *vim verborum*, he was not challenging St. Bernard's theology but his competence to judge a dialectical undertaking. The modern historian must admit that there was some justice on both sides.

In discussing Abailard, one must keep in mind what the word "dialectic" meant to him. First, it was not synonymous with the term *logica*; for the latter was often used to describe the entire trivium.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, the content of dialectic underwent a tremendous change in the middle of the century. In 1128 James of Venice translated again the *Topics*, *Analytics*, and *On Sophistical Refutations*.<sup>77</sup> These works appear at Chartres about 1140, being taught there by Thierry. They were certainly known to his students—Gilbert, Richard, Otto of Freising, and John of Salisbury.<sup>78</sup> By 1175 they were appearing in the catalogues of monastic libraries.<sup>79</sup> The important fact suggested by these dates is that Abailard did not have the new translations. One can find in Abailard's works a small number of quotations from the *Topics* and *On Sophistical Refutations*, but these were probably taken from Boethius.<sup>80</sup>

The discussion of Abailard will be in two sections. In the first will be considered the principles upon which his method depends. In particular, it will include his notions of faith and authority, his justification of reason in theology and the meaning of *intellectus fidei*, and finally the question of his rationalism. The second section will be an examination of his actual method, as seen in the ends for which he used dialectic. These can be summarized under four heads: apologetic and polemic,

<sup>76</sup> "La groupe des sciences du trivium, arts du langage, est appelé *logica* (*logica* n'égalé donc pas *dialectica*), selon l'extension même du mot grec λόγος, qui signifie à la fois mot, concept, discours (i. e. grammaire, dialectique, rhétorique)." Paré *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>77</sup> See Amable Jourdain, *Recherches critiques sur l'âge et l'origine des traductions latines* (Paris, 1834), pp. 53 f.

<sup>78</sup> See A. Clerval, *Les écoles de Chartres au moyen âge* (Chartres, 1895), pp. 244 f.

<sup>79</sup> Two examples are given in Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1909), II, 78.

<sup>80</sup> See Jourdain, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 ff, and p. 287, n. L. For a contrary view, see J. G. Sikes, *Peter Abailard* (London, 1932), p. 272.



textual analysis, investigation of mysteries, and the construction of theology.<sup>81</sup>

*Est quippe fides existimatio rerum non apparentium.*<sup>82</sup> This famous definition from the first book of the *Introductio ad Sanctam Theologiam* has been and continues to be a source of controversy. St. Bernard condemned Abailard for it,<sup>83</sup> and modern authors have tried to explain it in a variety of ways.<sup>84</sup> Most commentators have criticized the word *existimatio*, for in the twelfth century (and indeed in Abailard's works, too) the word often meant *opinion*. Cottiaux, however, has thrown new light on the problem by calling attention to the other part of the definition—*rerum non apparentium*—and to the context of the sentence. In the beginning of the first book of the *Introductio*, Abailard treats of faith, hope and charity; but an examination of his definitions makes it clear that he is *not* defining the theological virtues, but rather certain habits in general. With regard to the second and third of these virtues he states: "Hope is the expectation of some good to be attained. . . . Charity is disinterested love which is directed to a fitting end, as, on the other hand, cupidity is called interested or base love."<sup>85</sup> One may reasonably conclude that Abailard did not intend to define supernatural faith either. Indeed, the term must have a broader extension than that, for a little further on he explicitly narrows its meaning. "If one speaks for your edification concerning faith, it is sufficient that only those things be treated which, if not believed, bring damnation. But these are the things which pertain to the Catholic faith."<sup>86</sup>

To see in the word *existimatio* an expression touching the

<sup>81</sup> The *Tractatus* will be quoted from the edition of Stoltze; the *Dialectica* from that of Cousin; all others from Migne, v. CLXXXVIII: references to these will be only the column number; titles will be abbreviated.

<sup>82</sup> *Intr.*, 981 C.

<sup>83</sup> *Adv. Abael.*, c. 4; *PL* CLXXXII, 1061.

<sup>84</sup> For a brief resumé, see J. Cottiaux, "La conception de la théologie chez Abélard," *Rev. Hist. Eccl.*, XXVIII (1932), pp. 291 ff. The entire article (pp. 247-295, 533-551, 788-828) has been freely used here.

<sup>85</sup> *Intr.*, 981 C, 982 C.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 986 C.

certainty of faith is to fly in the face of Abailard's works, for nowhere else does he voice such doubts. His problem was quite different: to describe the kind of certain knowledge that faith was. It was certainly not *comprehensio*, for no human can know God completely. Nor was it *scientia* in the sense then given to the word. For example, Hugh of St. Victor wrote: "They know more perfectly who grasp the thing itself as it is in its very presence; these are *scientes*."<sup>87</sup> The important note of *scientia* was that the object was fully present to the knower. The significance of Abailard's sentence now becomes apparent. Faith in general is the kind of knowledge one has about an object that is not seen. "If someone says he has faith regarding things seen, then he abuses the term."<sup>88</sup> Abailard, then, did not reduce faith to opinion, but pointed out that in both types of knowledge the object is absent. That he repeated the phrase in question in other passages is an indication of his desire to emphasize the transcendence of the ultimate object of faith.<sup>89</sup>

It should be noted that faith is always the point of departure and the end in Abailard's theology. This is clear from phrases that keep recurring, phrases like "to support and defend the faith," "to penetrate the reasons of faith," and "to elaborate upon the faith."<sup>90</sup>

Faith is based upon the *auctores*: Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Fathers. Abailard's attitude toward these authorities was both respectfully submissive and intelligent. Theology has as ends to support these authorities and to help understand Scripture.<sup>91</sup> It was intelligent for he treated in a

<sup>87</sup> *De Sacramentis*, Pars X, c. 2; PL CLXXVI, 330 D.

<sup>88</sup> *Intr.*, 984 D. See also *Theol.*, 986 B: "His itaque testimoniis patet fidei nomen proprie, modo improprie poni, cum videlicet non solum de occultis, verum etiam de manifestis fides dicatur."

<sup>89</sup> "Par l'expression *aestimatio non apparentium*, il ne définit donc pas la foi, mais la rapproche d'un acte de connaissance, *aestimatio*, dont l'objet se présente à l'esprit dans les mêmes conditions; il utilisera donc cette expression quand il voudra souligner ce caractère. . . ." (Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, p. 291; see also Paré, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-300).

<sup>90</sup> For reference to these and similar phrases, see Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, p. 272 f.

<sup>91</sup> See *Tract.*, pp. 19, 21.

reasonable (if not entirely accurate) way the problem of error. The Fathers, he states, in fact did make errors, even in matters of faith; although canonical scripture never erred in such matters, yet it could be mistaken if there was no *fidei detrimendum*.<sup>92</sup> Granted that such errors were possible in these two sources of authority, how was the Christian to discern them? Clearly, by his reason. Although it is authority which establishes faith, reason must choose authorities, rejecting the Fathers when they are in error.<sup>93</sup> Choice implies criteria, and these were set forth in the Prologue to the *Sic et Non*. Revelation meant more than the Bible, for more than one doctrine of faith was found nowhere in Scripture. This principle, accepted by St. Anselm,<sup>94</sup> is clearly stated in the *Theologia Christiana* of Abailard: "Many necessary doctrines of the faith were added after the gospels by the Apostles or apostolic men which cannot be proved from the words of the gospels; such is the doctrine regarding the preservation of the virginity of the Mother of God even after she bore a child, and perhaps a number of other doctrines too."<sup>95</sup> In summary, then, Abailard may be said to have stressed the use of reason in the demarcation of precisely what doctrines were to be believed. Yet reason is never a substitute for the act of faith. "Men cannot be impelled by sense knowledge or by human reasoning to receive and believe these doctrines of faith, but they are to be drawn by authority alone."<sup>96</sup>

Abailard, however, did not limit reason to the function of ascertaining the doctrines of faith in Scripture and the Fathers.

<sup>92</sup> *Sic et Non*, 1346 D.

<sup>93</sup> Abailard quotes with approval St. Jerome's commentary on Psalm 81: "'Videte quod dicat: qui fuerunt, non qui sunt, ut exceptis apostolis, quodcunque aliud postea dicatur, abscondatur, non habeat postea auctoritatem. Quamvis ergo sanctus sit aliquis post apostolos, quamvis disertus sit, non habet auctoritatem. . . .' Non enim praejudicata doctoris opinio, sed doctrinae ratio ponderanda est, sicut scriptum est: Omnia probate; quod bonum est tenete. Hoc tamen de commentatoribus dictum est, non de canonicis Scripturis, quibus indubitam fidem convenit adhibere." (*Sic et Non*, 1348 C—1349 A)

<sup>94</sup> See *De Concordia* PL CLVIII, 528; and *De Processione*, *ibid.*, 315-6.

<sup>95</sup> *Theol.*, 1302 B.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 1224 B; see also Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 287 ff.



He also strove for an *intelligentia fidei*. The question may therefore be posed: what was his justification for this further use? In one sense this was hardly a problem at all. That is to say, throughout the entire theological tradition from St. Augustine to Abailard, there was a clear affirmation of the necessity for reasoning. Had not St. Augustine said: "The discipline of disputation is extremely valuable for all sorts of questions that must be solved in Sacred Scripture."<sup>97</sup> And this encomium was repeated in every century afterward. Abailard was in the same tradition in asserting: "A thing heard from God but not understood, incites the hearer to inquiry."<sup>98</sup>

On the other hand, this tradition also included the dictum of St. Gregory: "Faith has no merit in so far as it is based on reasoned certitude."<sup>99</sup> This trenchant statement was rather a stumbling block for thinkers; and even in the thirteenth century theologians were careful to give an interpretation of it. Abailard commented on it in three of his works.<sup>100</sup> The burden of his argument was that St. Gregory forbade us to substitute reason for true faith, but did not forbid the use of reason based on and presupposing faith. In other words, the motive of faith ought never to be conviction based on understanding—indeed that would not be faith at all—yet faith itself, once possessed, urges us on to further knowledge, "Faith has no merit in the eyes of God if one believes, not in God, who spoke through his saints, but in human reasonings which are frequently mistaken. . . ." <sup>101</sup> Reason, however, is not excluded altogether. "A thing heard from God but not understood, incites the hearer to inquiry; but the hearing comes first. Inquiry easily brings about understanding, if devotion be present."<sup>102</sup> Perhaps the basic reason for this further understanding, *intelligentia*, lies in the object

<sup>97</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana*, II, c. 31; *PL* XXXIV, 53 A.

<sup>98</sup> *Theol.*, 1225 C.

<sup>99</sup> *Homilia* XXVI.

<sup>100</sup> *Trin.*, p. 28; *Theol.*, 1226 A; *Intr.*, 1050 D. The version in Cousin and Migne of this last text is incorrect and misleading; the matter will be treated a little further on, when we consider the question of Abailard's rationalism.

<sup>101</sup> *Theol.*, 1226 A.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 1225 C.

of faith. Man is presented with propositions to which he is to give assent. If he does nothing but make the act of faith, he runs the risk of professing empty formulae—a strange state of affairs for a rational being. Thus Abailard excoriated those who held that the prophets did not understand their own sayings, and that therefore we should do likewise. “It they did not understand what they themselves spoke, then they were not wise. Therefore, if it is stupid to deny that the prophets were wise, it follows that they understood what they spoke.”<sup>103</sup>

Granted that faith ought to be followed by the attempt to understand, the question arises as to the type of *intelligentia fidei*. Cottiaux has studied this question in considerable detail,<sup>104</sup> and only a brief summary of his conclusions will be given. In the *Tractatus* Abailard conceived this greater understanding in a neoplatonic sense as a form of divine illumination. “Unless God manifest himself, our nature does not suffice to see him, lest we mortals, deeply stained with sin, should try with our petty reasonings to comprehend the incomprehensible.”<sup>105</sup> In the *Theologia*,<sup>106</sup> he places this understanding somewhere between divine illumination and the results of pure dialectic, but without being very specific. However, he does stress the strictly analogous character of our knowledge of God. “We transfer words from creature to Creator by a certain similitude: for men made these words to designate creatures whom they can understand, since they wished to manifest by the words something they understood . . . yet man is not able to understand God and has not dared to express by a word that ineffable good.”<sup>107</sup> Finally, in the *Introductio*, he restricts understanding to a limited grasp of revealed propositions. “He reduces the *intelligentia fidei* to the proportions of an indirect knowledge of the object of faith or of a comprehension of the grammatical sense of the propositions of revelation.”<sup>108</sup>

One of the most striking things about this evolution of thought is the restricted way in which Abailard used dialectic.

<sup>103</sup> *Intr.*, 1052 C.

<sup>104</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 533-551.

<sup>105</sup> *Tract.*, p. 27.

<sup>106</sup> *Theol.*, 1211-1229.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 1246 D.

<sup>108</sup> Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 548-9.

In the first stage, granted that one must use his own faculties, still the *intelligentia fidei* is a special gift of God. In the last stage, dialectic is of greater importance, not as leading directly to the reality expressed by propositions, but as capable of explaining the literal meaning of these propositions. Although this matter is still far from clear, it is apparent that no description of Abailard simply as a dialectician is adequate.

Twentieth century works on Abailard have tended more and more to discredit the notion that he was a rationalist. The question cannot be fully settled until his method is better understood. However, most attempts to make him a rationalist have been centered on, or at least included, two of his dicta: his phrase *astruere fidem*, and the text in the *Introductio*, column 1050 D in Migne. Both of these have been shown to have different meanings from those previously assigned to them. The verb *astruere* meant in the twelfth century both to *prove* and to *support*. Although Abailard used the verb in both senses, the phrase *astruere fidem* apparently never had the meaning of replacing faith by demonstrative reasoning. Thus in the *Tractatus* it was connected with polemic, while in the *Theologia* it included polemic and also apologetic and devotion, and in the *Introductio* there was the added note of elaboration and amplification.<sup>109</sup> In short, the phrase *astruere fidem*, though difficult and variable in meaning, has no probative force in this question. The text in the *Introductio* referred to above would indeed be a clear affirmation of rationalism of a sort: Man does not believe because God has revealed something, but because he himself is intellectually convinced of it. However, investigation by Ligeard<sup>110</sup> has turned up the source of the difficulty. The original printed version of Duchesne in 1616 contained some serious errors, and the faulty texts were repro-

<sup>109</sup> For texts, see Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 273 f.

<sup>110</sup> "Le rationalisme de Pierre Abélard," *Recherches de science religieuse* (1911), II, 394. Ligeard also gives his interpretation of Abailard's notion of faith. "Au début, interviendrait une démonstration strictement rationnelle, oeuvre exclusive de l'intelligence: la grâce, survenant ensuite, transformerait ce premier acte et engendrerait ainsi la foi surnaturelle . . ." (p. 396). Such a view, however, is in clear contradiction to numberless texts, some of which already have been cited above.



duced by Cousin and Migne. There is given below a rough translation of the emended text; the Latin version of it may be found in the periodical cited.

Could not the unbelievers, whom St. Gregory wished to lead by argumentation to a belief in the Resurrection, could they not retort by using his own principle, namely, that faith is not to be approached by reasoning. . . . But in fact St. Gregory never said that one should not use reason in matters of faith, nor, on the other hand, did he permit faith to be limited and controlled by human reason. What he *did* say was that faith had no merit in the eyes of God, if one did not accept it on the divine authority, but rather was pressed into believing by the force of arguments: such would be the case when a man believes not because God has spoken, but because he himself has attained a reasoned conviction.

Such a statement is clearly in accord with the attitudes expressed elsewhere in Abailard's works:<sup>111</sup> reason is never a substitute for faith, but reason does have definite functions, basing itself upon faith. The question of his rationalism is too complex to be dealt with at any greater length. Although the twelfth century was one of growth and experiment, and although Abailard was sometimes bold in expression and not always clear and consistent, still it serves no purpose and is seriously misleading to speak of Abailard as a rationalist.<sup>112</sup>

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The discussion so far has concerned the principles which underlie Abailard's method. The method itself can now be

<sup>111</sup> For example: ". . . perpende quisquis es quanta praesumptio sit de eo, quod cuncta transcendat humana, discutere ratione, nec aliter acquiescere velle, donec ea quae dicuntur, aut ex sensu aut ratione humana sint" (*Theol.*, 1221 D—1224 A). Again, Abailard's emphasis on the analogous character of human knowledge of God should be noted: "Unde in Deo nullum propriam inventionem vocabulum servare videtur, sed omnia quae de eo dicuntur translationibus et parabolicis aenigmatibus involuta sunt et per similitudinem aliquam vestigantur ex parte aliqua inductam, ut aliquid de illa ineffabili majestate suspicando potius quam intelligendo potius quam intelligendo degustemus." (*Ibid.*, 1246 D)

<sup>112</sup> The question of Abailard's rationalism leads into the further question of his relation to later Protestant thought. For different views on this, the following may be consulted: J. R. McCallum, *Abelard's Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948), pp. 20-22, 30-44; Gonzague Truc, *Abélard avec et sans Héloïse* (Paris: Fayard, 1956), pp. 55-89.

described and illustrated in terms of the ends for which dialectic was used. The first of these—apologetic and polemic—was certainly the most traditional. This aspect of Abailard's works was not particularly different, either in content or method, from what had gone before.

"Learn what you would teach so that you may be able to exhort in sacred doctrine and to vanquish those who contradict you."<sup>113</sup> This injunction of St. Jerome was quoted by Abailard in the *Introductio*,<sup>113</sup> and suggests the basis on which apologetic and polemic were to be founded. No one can teach religion unless he himself has a solid grasp of the material. He need not necessarily have a profound understanding of the reality, but he must at least grasp the immediate meaning of God's revealed words. He can then establish the credibility of Christ's Church and show that there is nothing absurd, nothing contrary to reason in its doctrines. Such an apologetic occupied a relatively small place in Abailard's first works, but seemed to assume a greater importance in the later ones.<sup>114</sup> Polemic, on the other hand, received considerable attention in the early works and then diminished in importance. In Abailard's statements of purpose, the refutation of the philosophers is repeatedly mentioned.<sup>115</sup> Dialectic in polemic is simply the standard *ars disputandi*—rhetoric and the *logica vetus*. It was easily justified by authority.

When He promised his disciples the virtue of wisdom, by which they could refute the arguments of their opponents, saying: "I will give you wisdom of speech which your adversaries will not be able to resist" . . . clearly He promised them that armor of reasons by which they would be made most skillful in dispute. . . . Who does not know that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself bested the Jews in frequent disputes?<sup>116</sup>

In the interpretation and conciliation of texts dialectic found a role for itself that was certainly more original and in some

<sup>113</sup> *Intr.*, 1048 D.

<sup>114</sup> See Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 272 ff.

<sup>115</sup> See *Tract.*, p. 29; *Theol.*, 1227 C; *Intr.*, 1040 A.

<sup>116</sup> *Epistola* 13; 355-356.

ways more important than apologetic and polemic. The Fathers of the Church had been concerned with the conciliation of the Old and New Testament. Medieval thinkers had a far greater task in the conciliation of the Fathers. They found themselves with a great quantity of materials "culled from the most disparate works, from all times and places, torn out of context, and without care for their precise meaning or perspective."<sup>117</sup> The task could not be ignored, for the *consensus patrum* was essential in the understanding and elaboration of doctrine. From the time of Heriger of Lobbes<sup>118</sup> in the tenth century the attempt to reconcile these texts was continuous. Different methods were attempted. Rabanus and Erugena simply chose those texts which were suitable for the task at hand. Hincmar<sup>119</sup> and Hugh of Reading<sup>120</sup> would have the authority of the Church be the ultimate criterion. Hugh of St. Victor looked to the faith itself for guidance.<sup>121</sup> Each of these methods was useful, but minimal. Each left untouched the problem of understanding precisely what was said by the patristic texts.

The methods used by Abailard and outlined in the introduction to the *Sic et Non* appear to derive mainly from the canonists. During the second half of the ninth century canon law began to be organized according to rational methods rather than chronology. The classified canons, not unmixed with dogmatic materials, were for centuries a very convenient source for patristic documentation. The canonists had to face the problem of conciliating the texts, and by 1100 we find that they had worked out very clearly defined methods. Bernold of Constance listed the following principles: 1) the context is to be clearly grasped; 2) there must be a comparison of texts; 3) the circumstances of time, place and person must be ex-

<sup>117</sup> Paré, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

<sup>118</sup> *De Corpore et sanguine Domini*, PL CXXXIX, 186 A; and see Ghellinck, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 ff.

<sup>119</sup> *De praedestinatione*, c. 4; PL CXXV, 88 C.

<sup>120</sup> *Dialogorum* VII, 1; PL CXCH, 333 A.

<sup>121</sup> "Disce prius breviter et dilucide, quid tenendum sit de fide Trinitatis. . . ." (*Didascalion*, VI, c. 4, p. 20 in critical edition of Charles Buttmer [Catholic University of America, 1939]; PL CLXXVI, 804 A).



amined; 5) general measures are to be distinguished from particular dispensations.<sup>122</sup> An improved set of these principles was widely circulated in the *De Consonantia Canonum* of Yves of Chartres.<sup>123</sup> It was only a matter of time before theologians began to adopt such principles. We shall see below how similar were those set forth by Abailard.

If dialectic was to support the *auctoritates*,<sup>124</sup> certainly these authorities themselves had to be understood. It was with this end in view that Abailard wrote the *Sic et Non*. "... to collect various sayings of the Holy Fathers, sayings which strike us as containing conflicting views on certain questions, such as would provoke students to great efforts at inquiry and would sharpen their capacities by practice."<sup>125</sup> The conflict of authorities was an occasion not for scepticism but for inquiry. The principles of such an inquiry were to lead to a better understanding of the texts and hence to a resolution of the conflicts. These principles have been described as dialectical, where dialectic is used in a very broad sense, containing many heterodox elements. A prolonged study would be necessary to determine the sources and types of disciplines amalgamated into this instrument of textual analysis. Some of the principles were grammatical, some purely textual (authenticity, interpolations, etc.), and some dialectical in the sense of the *logica vetus*. The surprising thing is that some were dialectical in the strictly Aristotelian sense. Since Abailard did not have the *logica nova*, one must conclude that either he or the canonists or some of his contemporaries had arrived at the same insights and methods that one finds in the *Topics*.

There is given below a list of the principles mentioned in the prologue to the *Sic et Non*.<sup>126</sup> It would indeed be desirable to

<sup>122</sup> See *De excommunicatis vitandis*, PL CXLVIII, 214.

<sup>123</sup> PL CLXI, 47 ff.

<sup>124</sup> See *Tract.*, p. 19; *Theol.*, 1171 A; and *Intr.*, 1039 C, 1047 A.

<sup>125</sup> *Sic et Non*, 1349 A. Various historians have claimed to see a different purpose behind the *Sic et Non*; yet no convincing proof has been offered in support of such conjectures, and therefore Abailard's own statement of purpose is repeated here. For a resumé of the question, see McCallum, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-106.

<sup>126</sup> The summary used is that of Paré, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

discuss the origins of each to see how much was derived from the Patristic tradition and how much was truly original. However, such a discussion would require a great deal of research, which apparently has never been attempted.

1) Words vary in meaning according to the language of the writer, his skill, his audience and the flexibility of his thought. Above all, the actual usage of words is to be considered.<sup>127</sup>

2) Texts must be authenticated, corruptions emended, and interpolations removed.

3) Meaning can be established only after comparison of one passage with another and with retractions; concessions to the taste and ideas of contemporaries must be estimated.

4) Distinctions must be made between law and dispensation, universal precepts and particular decisions, laws and counsels of perfection.

5) If necessary, a hierarchy of authorities is to be established.

The most striking thing about the principles is their spirit of conscious scientific inquiry. "This first key to wisdom may be defined as assiduous or frequent interrogation. . . . In doubting, we come to inquiry; through inquiry we arrive at truth."<sup>128</sup> The most fundamental principle is that words simply do not have a static and universal meaning: "A quick solution to many controversies would be at hand, if it were granted that the same words can mean different things in different authors."<sup>129</sup>

The following have been considered so far as ends of dialectic: apologetic, polemic and the conciliation of texts. They have this in common that they are operations upon something already possessed. The doctrines of faith are presented and explained; they are defended against attack; they are supported

<sup>127</sup> "Quibus [verbis] quidem si ad doctrinam, ut oportet, loqui volumus, magis eorum usus quam proprietates sermonis aemulandus est, sicut et ipse grammaticae princeps et locutionum instructor Priscianus edocet." (*Sic et Non*), 1339 C.

<sup>128</sup> *Sic et Non*, 1349.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 1344 D.

by authorities in which their origins are revealed. Apart from these ends, there still remains a further confrontation of dialectic and the faith, one more problematic and involving search rather than possession. In this constructive side of dialectic, two aspects may be distinguished. First, does Abailard see dialectic as an instrument with which the Christian mysteries can be penetrated and their content further divulged? Or, on the other hand, is he more interested in the statement of the mysteries considered formally as propositions? Secondly, is dialectic to play a part in organizing that vast body of doctrine and rational elaborations of doctrine? In other words, what is the architectonic factor in theology? No one has yet produced a thorough study of how Abailard treated these questions. We can therefore speak only of Abailard's general attitudes, giving particular examples when possible.

With regard to the first aspect mentioned above, it is perhaps easier to say what Abailard was against than to say what he was for. He was certainly opposed to those who thought that the Christian mysteries should be only believed, not investigated by human reasoning. Abailard's answer was simple and to the point: the Fathers did it; so can we. The Fathers wrote many tracts, for example, on the Trinity. One after another wrote on it; and when one broached a problem, another treated it still more widely.<sup>130</sup> Human reason, therefore, *could* certainly do *something* with regard to the mysteries; and since the object, God, was the most worthy object possible, reason *should* exert itself.<sup>131</sup>

A more difficult question arises now. Precisely what did Abailard wish human reason, that is, dialectic, to accomplish in its consideration of the mysteries? Its most basic role is to give some content to formularies, which would otherwise be empty concatenations of sounds. "The *intelligentia* is not

<sup>130</sup> See *Intr.*, 1046 D.

<sup>131</sup> "At vero perpauci sunt, quibus huius scientiae secretum, immo sapientiae thesaurum divina revelare dignetur; quae quidem quanto subtilior est, tanto difficilior; quanto autem difficilior, tanto rarius; quanto autem rarius, tanto pretiosior; quanto pretiosior, tanto maioris studii digna exercitio. . . ." (*Dialectica*, p. 436)



therefore a way of substituting for faith vision based on demonstration; clearly, it is first of all the understanding of the words and formulas in which the faith is announced and expressed, and so *intelligere* is distinguished from the simple *dicere*.”<sup>132</sup> However, Paré would appear to be guilty of overstatement when he adds: “The *intelligentia fidei* is also and especially the penetration of the content of the words. . . .”<sup>133</sup> Abailard was indeed not opposed to arguments and illustrations which shed some light upon the mysteries. Yet his primary purpose would seem not to be the penetration of the content of the mysteries, but rather the relating of theological propositions and other forms of statement. The object studied is the propositions themselves—linguistic artifacts susceptible of analysis according to the rules of grammar and dialectic. Once the proposition has been scrutinized with regard to the text (authenticity, etc.), and the meaning of the words (taken individually) explained, then dialectic enters in. “It explains the dogma, either by showing the equivalence of formulas by the rules on the extension of predicates and subjects, or in finding for it analogies in objects which require similar modes of speech. In both these ways, it proves the firm foundation of the faith without discussing its object. The method of Abailard, therefore, does not presuppose an intrinsic knowledge of the mystery.”<sup>134</sup>

Some examples will serve to clarify these assertions. Abailard discusses the question of whether one may say that God existed *before* the world and will exist *after* it. The problem is basically the grammarian’s problem of the consignification of verbs. “When we transfer any words to the singular divine nature, we must draw them into a certain singular signification and construction. . . . Since God transcends all things ineffably, is it to be wondered at that he exceeds all words of human making?”<sup>135</sup>

A more dialectical example would be his treatment of the Trinity in the *Theologia Christiana*. From among the many

<sup>132</sup> Paré, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, p. 822.

<sup>135</sup> *Theol.*, 1245 B, C.

questions there discussed, one will be singled out and the various elements of his solution shown. The question is this: is it correct to say that the Father is the Son? First, Abailard introduces an analogy—a waxen image and the wax of which it is made. Are these the same or different? “The *materia* and the *materiatum* are the same in number, yet they do not share their properties.”<sup>136</sup> For the wax itself is not the image (the wax is not made from itself); and the image is not its own material, since nothing is a constituent part of itself or naturally prior to itself. Therefore, the wax and the waxen image are the same essence, but their properties are distinct. Next, he points out that this is a special case of a general rule in dialectic. “If we take the words ‘wax’ and ‘waxen image’ absolutely, it is permitted to join them together by predication on account of their identity of substance. . . . But if we take these words relatively, as *materia* and *materiatum*, or constituent and constituted, or cause and effect, or generating and generated, then it is not permitted to join them in predication according to their properties.”<sup>137</sup> Abailard then considers the Trinity in the light of these rules and shows that we use predication in an analogous way there. “And by the same rule applied to the divine persons, the Father is not the Son (for then God the Father would be generated by himself), nor is the Son the Father (for then God the Son would generate himself). . . .”<sup>138</sup>

During this discussion, Abailard brings in from time to time other dialectical rules and shows how they relate to this one.<sup>139</sup> He also makes in passing a methodological comment that would support the interpretation given above of his treatment of the mysteries. He remarks: “When a question is put regarding *words*—that is, whether a word is taken to mean this or that (as in this passage, for example, we ask why it cannot truly be said that the Father is the Son)—then the whole controversy is to be referred *ad vim verborum*.”<sup>140</sup> It may be concluded,

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 1248 B, C.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 1288 C, D.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 1290 A.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, 1277 A, B, C.

<sup>140</sup> *Theol.*, 1273 C.

then, that Abailard's end in the investigation of mysteries is not to substitute demonstration for them, and not primarily to deduce new knowledge by a penetration of their content. What he attempts is to give a logical justification for the formulas in which the mysteries are expressed, to show their continuity with dialectic.<sup>141</sup>

The second and final aspect of Abailard's dialectic considered as inventive has to do with the structure of theology. Here Abailard was less a striking innovator than a participant in an evolutionary process. We have in mind the evolution away from exegesis of texts toward a consideration of specific problems or topics, and ultimately toward the *summa*—the body of significant theological problems, arranged and related according to principles.

The evolution of literary forms has been studied by many authors,<sup>142</sup> and only the briefest outline need be given here. The pedagogical system of the *lectio* underwent continual elaboration until it finally gave way to a more topical method of presentation. The *lectio* contained introductory remarks about the author and the text to be considered, which led into the exposition of the text. According to Hugh of St. Victor, the *expositio* contained three elements: *littera*, *sensus*, and *sententia*. The first concerned the syntax of the text; the second, its immediate meaning; the third, some problematic passage, of which a brief discussion was given.<sup>143</sup> Gradually these discussions or opinions came to be collected apart from the original text (though following the same order) and thus constituted a discussion of problems for their own sake. Just at this point the *logica nova* began to circulate in Europe and it proved a powerful instrument as the *quaestio* achieved complete independence from textual commitments. The further development toward the *disputatio*, the *quaestio disputata* and the *summa* came after Abailard and need not be discussed here.

Abailard, as mentioned above, was but one figure in this

<sup>141</sup> See Cottiaux, *op. cit.*, p. 813.

<sup>142</sup> See works already cited by Grabmann, Paré, Ghellinck, etc.

<sup>143</sup> *Didascalion* III, c. 9.



lengthy process. One finds in him both the old and the new. His *Dialectica* is not a speculative study of a subject matter, but rather, at least in its form, a commentary on Boethius. On the other hand, the *Introductio* is an original work: specific problems organized according to the author's principles. It is organized into three sections: faith, charity, and the sacraments. Faith is treated first because of its priority in the Christian life; and within the section, God, the ultimate principle, is treated first.<sup>144</sup> Again, one should note the limited scope of Abailard's efforts. There is no attempt to organize theology on the model of Aristotelian sciences, such as one finds in some of his contemporaries<sup>145</sup> and especially in the thirteenth century.

### CONCLUSION

As was suggested in the Introduction, the primary conclusion to be drawn from this survey is that a great deal of research is needed. Few authors have given more than passing notice to the various points that have been touched upon. Not until a great deal more work has been done, and from a variety of points of view, can any greater certainty be achieved. Dialectic in some sense has always been a part of theological method. Yet, as has been shown, dialectic has assumed a great variety of meanings even in the limited period under consideration. In some cases the meaning given it by one author was representative of his age; in others, particularly in Abailard, the term must be understood in function of an individual. Serious historical study which allows for such complexity is indeed needed if dialectic is to be used fruitfully in modern theology.

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<sup>144</sup> "Ac primum de fide, quae naturaliter caeteris prior est, tamquam bonorum omnium fundamentum." "Primo itaque hanc fidei summam ponamus, de unitate scilicet ac trinitate divina; deinde positam, prout Dominus dederit disseramus." (*Intr.*, 984 B and 987 A)

<sup>145</sup> We have in mind Gilbert, William of Conches and Thierry of Chartres. See Clerval, *op. cit.*, pp. 246 ff; and Chenu, "Une essai de méthode théologique au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue de Sciences philosophiques et théologique*, XXIV (1935), pp. 258-267.

## THE TWO SCEPTICISMS IN HUME'S *TREATISE*



AMONG the many anomalies of Hume's thought one of the most striking is the contrast between the limited, philosophical scepticism which Hume set out to defend at the beginning of the *Treatise* and the radical scepticism which he was forced to admit at the end of the first book of the *Treatise*. In the first three parts of Book One (and more implicitly than explicitly in the second and third books) Hume is sceptical of all attempts to construct a rational metaphysics. He insists that custom and association alone explain our natural certitudes, and that any rational (i.e., strictly logical) explanation of them is foredoomed to failure. He tells us that we must accept our natural certitudes and be sceptical of any rational explanation of them. But in the fourth part of Book One Hume's argumentation leads him to a much different conclusion; there he finds that, as a philosopher, he must reject even our natural certitudes.<sup>1</sup>

For years this second position, that of radical scepticism, was considered the essential element of Hume's thought. With this as their premise, Hume's critics suppressed the positive elements of the first position, especially his trust in our natural judgments—the naturalism which has been so much emphasized in recent years,<sup>2</sup> and found that the Hume who remained was easily refuted. He was the complete sceptic, who used reason to deny reason, and built up complex arguments to show that

<sup>1</sup> Hume himself was aware of the anomaly of this position. Early in part four of the first book of the *Treatise* he tells us: "I begun this subject with premising that we ought to have an implicit faith in our senses. . . . But to be ingenuous, I feel myself *at present* . . . more inclin'd to repose no faith at all in my senses. . . ." I, iv, 2 (*T*, 217) [I, iv, 2 = *Treatise*, Book One, Part Four, Section Two; *T* = the Selby-Bigge edition of the *Treatise*.]

<sup>2</sup> Kemp Smith is most responsible for the re-interpretation of Hume. His articles, "The Naturalism of Hume," *Mind*, N. S. XIV (1905), 149-73 and 335-347 and his *The Philosophy of David Hume* (Edinburgh and London, 1941) are required reading for any serious student of Hume.

no arguments are valid. Convinced that this was the real Hume, the critics dismissed everything else in his writings as inconsistency or as the clever dissembling of a revolutionary who preferred to tone down his statements rather than enrage popular opinion. Recent study of Hume has seen that this simplistic view does not do justice to the complexity of Hume's thought, and various attempts have been made to re-evaluate Hume on the basis of the positive as well as the negative elements of the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*.<sup>3</sup>

But although this revaluation has led to a discussion of the contrasts in Hume's thought, most of the work done on Hume's twofold scepticism has considered the relations between the two fully developed theories and the possibility or impossibility of reconciling the two. Not enough attention has been paid to the inner development of Hume's thought and to the interesting problem of why Hume *himself* in the fourth part of Book One of the *Treatise* felt obliged to abandon his naturalism and accept a much more radical scepticism. It is the purpose of this study to show that an investigation of this problem of why Hume himself passed from one scepticism to the other can throw much light on the nature of the *Treatise* itself and can enable us to distinguish a number of separate questions which Hume failed to distinguish. When we have sorted out these questions, we will be able to point out the source of a series of confusions which forced Hume to change the original question and pose a new problem which never would have arisen had he not abandoned his initial design.

The key to the solution of this problem lies in Hume's distinction between knowledge and belief. This is the thread which goes through the first book of the *Treatise*, and it is Hume's inability to give a satisfactory account of this distinction which, in our contention, explains his radical scepticism. To see that this is so we need only follow him step by step through the first book of the *Treatise* as he gradually (and for

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the most penetrating of these is J. Passmore's *Hume's Intentions* (Cambridge, 1952), a dense little book which discusses the several themes of Hume's thought.



the most part seemingly unconsciously) introduces the confusions which bring him face to face with a problem different from that which he set out to discuss, and force him into the sceptical conclusion of the fourth part of the first book of the *Treatise*.

To avoid confusion we must treat two aspects of this problem separately. First we must look into Hume's division of the objects of knowing and believing into "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact,"<sup>4</sup> and then study the distinction between knowing and believing. We have to treat the question of objects first because Hume himself takes this as the more basic fact and distinguishes the acts of knowing and believing because he is convinced that their objects are distinct. Thus, much that is pertinent to the discussion of knowledge and belief is given to us in Hume's account of their objects. Following Hume's lead, then, we shall first discuss what he has to say about the objects of knowledge and belief. Then, in the second part of this article we shall discuss the distinction between knowledge and belief. In the third part we shall attempt to show how the manner in which Hume handles these two problems explains the new type of scepticism which he introduces at the end of the first book of the *Treatise*.

## I

Hume's division of the objects of cognition into "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact" is fundamental to his thought. With it he wants to propose a new philosophy, one which restricts metaphysical speculation, and so also "knowledge," to the abstract study of the relations between ideas, and which establishes a system of natural certitudes or beliefs. This system of beliefs will be non-metaphysical in the sense that it is not interested in "natures" or "essences" but only in a description of our beliefs. Since it avoids the speculation of

<sup>4</sup> This disjunction is stated most clearly in the *Enquiry*, Section Four, Part One (E, 25): "All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *Relations of Ideas*, and *Matters of Fact*." Cf. also *Treatise*, I, iii, 7 (T, 94) and III, i, 1 (T, 463). [E = Selby-Bigge's edition of the *Enquiries*.]

earlier thinkers, it will escape the contradictions which down the ages have plagued even the most perspicacious framers of philosophical systems. Instead of *a priori* speculations, Hume intends to use "careful and exact experiments and the observation of those particular effects, which result from its [the mind's] different circumstances and situations."<sup>5</sup> This is the new "science of MAN,"<sup>6</sup> which refuses to go beyond experience, but which will nevertheless be "a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one on which they can stand with any security."<sup>7</sup> The introduction to the *Treatise* tingles with the excitement of discovery as Hume outlines his program. He is convinced that he at last has found a way to keep to the facts and eliminate metaphysical speculation, to deal with the facts of the world about us and our natural mental operations without chasing the will-o-the-wisp which is the "essence" of our mind or of things.<sup>8</sup> In a word, he will analyze our beliefs without trying to turn them into knowledge.

The young Hume, however, was a bit hasty in adopting his disjunction between relations of ideas and matters of fact, for the latter turn out to be unfortunately ambiguous. As MacNabb points out, a matter of fact can be "(a) a proposition whose contradictory is intelligible (a synthetic proposition) and (b) a proposition which asserts the existence of some object (an existential proposition)."<sup>9</sup> Hume's failure to see this is a fundamental confusion and one which was bound to cause trouble, for it committed Hume to consider all propositions about relations of ideas as exclusively analytic, and so all knowledge (in his strict sense) as exclusively analytic. For if matters of fact include synthetic as well as existential propositions, all that is left for relations of ideas are analytic, non-existential propositions. That analytic propositions are non-existential had been the contention of empirical philoso-

<sup>5</sup> Introduction to the *Treatise* (T, xxi).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, (T, xx).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, (T, xix).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, (T, xxi).

<sup>9</sup> D. C. G. MacNabb, *David Hume, His Theory of Knowledge and Morality* (London, 1951), p. 45 note.

phers from Aristotle down through his Arabian and scholastic disciples to Locke and Berkeley. They agreed that knowledge of the relations of ideas, *of itself*, tells us nothing about the real existing world. They did not, however, say that there could be no synthetic knowledge. In his denial of this Hume goes beyond his less radically empirical predecessors.

But although Hume wants all knowledge to be analytic, he is not so sure that he wants it to be non-existential. For since in his view all ideas are derivative of impressions, they do tell us something about the existence of their correlates. At least we can say that there is an impression, existing now or formerly, from which each idea is derived.<sup>10</sup> What this "existence" means, however, is another question. Most of the time it is the impression which exists for Hume. But ideas "exist" just as much as impressions, and so Hume is led to consider impressions and ideas as two more or less parallel series of existents. This gives him a double existence which will come back to haunt him. For if his "relations of ideas" versus "matters of fact" disjunction is to make sense, the relations of ideas must be between the content of ideas and prescind from their "reality" in any existential sense. But Hume never realized the importance of this view of the disjunction. Very frequently he wants to consider ideas as existents, or at least as including existence. Thus, he tells us that nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible and that everything we perceive includes the idea of possible existence.<sup>11</sup> Although this could stand if it were taken to mean that our ideas prescind from actual existence, Hume, at times at least, understands it in a strange way. While denying that we have a separate idea of existence,<sup>12</sup> he introduces existence into all our ideas by suppressing their representative character and making all ideas existing ideas. We either have a perception or we do not, he tells us, and it makes no sense to say that we have a non-existent perception.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Treatise*, I, i, 1 (T, 3).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, I, ii, 2 and 4 (T, 32 and 43); I, iii, 6 (T, 89); I, iv, 5 (T, 233).

<sup>12</sup> Appendix to *Treatise* (T, 623) and I, iii, 7 (T, 94).

<sup>13</sup> *Treatise*, I, ii, 6 (T, 66).



"The idea of existence then is the same with the idea of what we conceive to be existent,"<sup>14</sup> and "whatever we conceive we conceive to be existent."<sup>15</sup> This makes it impossible for us to conceive non-existence by means of perceptions, and since Hume reduces all judgments to perceptions,<sup>16</sup> it would seem to make any conception of non-existence impossible. For, as Passmore says, it "would involve thinking simultaneously of an idea as existing (the fact) and as non-existing (the negation)."<sup>17</sup>

But even apart from such contradictions, which Hume might find some way to avoid, this method of considering ideas plays havoc with his disjunction between ideas and matters of fact. For if ideas are to be called existents, and all judgments about existents are to be judgments about matters of fact, ideas thus become matters of fact. And it would seem that relations between the matters of fact which are ideas should not be different from the relations between other matters of fact. But the whole point of Hume's distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact was to make it possible to distinguish between relations of ideas, which were supposed to be analytical, and relations of matters of fact, which we learn from experience. And if it is impossible to distinguish these two kinds of relation, it is consequently impossible to distinguish between knowledge and belief.

If we approach this distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact from a different angle and ask what concretely Hume meant by relations of ideas and by matters of fact, we find that the distinction between the two is just as elusive. Hume took it so much for granted that everybody knew what he meant by relations of ideas—he thought he was using the term in the then current philosophical sense—that he hardly does more than list them: "*These four are resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, and proportions in quantity or number.*"<sup>18</sup> On the face of it these are logical

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 67).

<sup>16</sup> *Treatise*, III, i, 1 (T, 456); I, iii, 7 (T, 96-97 note).

<sup>17</sup> *Hume's Intentions*, 27.

<sup>18</sup> *Treatise* I, iii, 1 (T, 70).

relations between the content of various ideas, but in the only study which he made of the relations of ideas, his abortive attempt to explain space and time,<sup>19</sup> Hume's inability to decide whether he is studying logical relations, which can be known analytically, or spatial and temporal relations learned from experience, hamstrung him and led to his peculiar theory of non-extended points, which added together produce extension, and non-durational instants, which added together produce duration.<sup>20</sup> In the end it is impossible to say whether these relations are logical or factual, and whether the ideas involved are "ideas" or "matters of fact."

Similarly, when we seek to determine concretely what are matters of fact, Hume gives us no clear answer. For besides confusing synthetic with existential propositions, as we have seen, he never seems to have clearly determined what he wants to be the object of belief, or exactly what it is that he wants to exist. If, as T. H. Green did,<sup>21</sup> we were to take Hume literally at his word when he is speaking in his most sensationalistic and sceptical vein,<sup>22</sup> we should conclude that all that exists is a stream of atomized impressions, and that these are the only real "matters of fact." This would make everything else fictitious and would limit our legitimate belief to belief in a stream of impressions. All our other beliefs—prescinding for the moment from the oddity of having other beliefs, if all that exists is a stream of impressions—all these beliefs would be illusions, illegitimate extensions of true belief. This is Green's conclusion. Hume, however, has too keen a sense of reality to draw such a conclusion himself. For him, belief is almost always belief in existing objects, and even when he is explaining his theory of ideas, he insists that we believe in objects. He can do this because he confuses perception and object,<sup>23</sup> and so can

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, I, ii, 1-5 (*T*, 26-65).

<sup>20</sup> For a study and criticism of this theory cf. Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, 288-90, or Passmore, *Hume's Intentions*, 111-113.

<sup>21</sup> In his introduction to the *Treatise* in the Green-Grose edition of Hume's works (London, 1874) vol. 1, pp. 161-63.

<sup>22</sup> E. g., *Treatise*, I, ii, 6 (*T*, 67-68); I, iii, 5 (*T*, 84); I, iv, 2 (*T*, 210); etc.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Treatise*, I, iv, 2 (*T*, 202) where the confusion is quite deliberate.

pass from one to the other, now predicating something of our perceptions, now predicating it of things.

This confusion is not critical in the first three sections of the first book of the *Treatise* because there Hume presumes the validity of our natural judgments. But even here, as Passmore notes:

To make sense of Hume's theories, indeed we must read "things" for "impressions," and "empirical propositions" for "beliefs"; it is things which are constantly conjoined; it is propositions, not "ideas," which are "associated with" the observations we have made.<sup>24</sup>

It is only in the fourth part of the first book, when Hume finds that objects and perceptions have conflicting properties,<sup>25</sup> that he is faced with the dilemma which is the proximate cause of his scepticism.

Such then is the ambiguous state of "matters of fact" and "relations of ideas" in the *Treatise*. Since, however, this is not the main point of our study, there is no need to point out the further complications in the theory.<sup>26</sup> It is enough if we have shown the inadequacy of the distinction and the more important confusions involved. To these we shall return in the third section.

## II

The second part of our discussion is more complicated, for when we pass from the objects to acts of knowing and believing, the first thing which strikes us is that our very division of cognitive acts into knowing and believing is premature. For Hume's first division, in Part Three of the *Treatise*, gives us not knowledge and belief, but knowledge and *probability*.<sup>27</sup> Later on,<sup>28</sup> Hume will tell us that at this point he wanted to

<sup>24</sup> *Hume's Intentions*, 158.

<sup>25</sup> *Treatise*, I, iv, 2 (T, 212).

<sup>26</sup> Many studies of Hume consider this problem. The solutions usually involve substantial modifications and/or expansions of Hume's ideas. Cf., for example, Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, 356-57.

<sup>27</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 2 (T, 69sq.).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 1 (T, 124).



use probability to include all our arguments from causes and effects, but that the more accurate distinction would be tripartite: knowledge, proofs, and probabilities.

The matter, however, is not as simple as Hume thought. There are two problems here which Hume seems unable to separate. In one he wants to distinguish two *kinds* of certitude, and in the other various *degrees* of certitude.<sup>29</sup> The confusion centers around the meaning of "probable." When Hume distinguishes probability from knowledge, he frequently means to distinguish natural from philosophical certitude, or to use his more common expression, certitudes about matters of fact from certitudes about relations of ideas.<sup>30</sup> Here there is no difference of degree between the two certitudes. Both result in full conviction, but one is certitude of the knowledge type and the other is certitude of the belief type. In these contexts the motive for the second kind of certitude is a "probable reason." At other times, however, a "probable reason" can be one which does not remove all hesitation. Then the proposition may concern relations of ideas *or* matters of fact.<sup>31</sup> In such contexts "proofs" will give full certitude about matters of fact, and "knowledge" will give full certitude about relations of ideas, whereas "probable reasons" produce only partial certitude. In the third section I shall try to show how this ambiguity concerning probability played an important role in the development of the scepticism of the fourth part of the first book of the *Treatise*.

But to get on with our consideration of knowing and believing, let us see what Hume means by knowing, as a psychological phenomenon. Ordinarily he distinguishes knowing from believing by distinguishing their objects, and we have seen how difficult it is to apply this distinction. In his discussion of

<sup>29</sup> In sections one and two of Part Three of the first book Hume is distinguishing kinds of certitude. In section one he is also dealing with probability (lack of convincing evidence) in relations of ideas; in sections eleven and twelve he is considering this probability in matters of fact.

<sup>30</sup> E. g., *Treatise*, I, iii, 6 (T, 89); I, iii, 2 (T, 69sq.); I, iii, 12 (T, 140).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *supra*, note 29.

knowing and believing themselves, Hume gives the clearest distinction between the two when he contrasts knowing and believing as thinking and feeling.<sup>32</sup> But although he says a good deal about what he means by feeling, as we shall see in a moment, he gives no description of knowing, as such. Sometimes he wants to say that knowing is consciously having an image of an impression (or object).<sup>33</sup> This is correlative to his notorious theory of ideas, and, like it, is left in the background when Hume is discussing knowledge of objects and of relations. In these discussions there seems to be no difference (as far as the kind of act is concerned) between knowing an idea and feeling an impression. Both are awareness of the other as other. And Hume himself would seem to say as much when he makes the difference between knowing and feeling merely a difference of force and vivacity.<sup>34</sup>

If knowing is left unexplained, almost too much is said about belief. Hume gives us an official definition of it in his oft quoted: "Belief may be most accurately defin'd, A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION."<sup>35</sup> But, much as Hume likes this definition, it is not broad enough to cover everything he wants to classify as belief. It can refer only to inferential certitudes, and Hume, sometimes at least, wants belief to cover the feeling of "an immediate impression or a repetition of that impression in the memory."<sup>36</sup> The difficulty is, of course, that in the long discussions of belief in the third and fourth parts of the first book of the *Treatise* Hume is considering only beliefs which fall into the causal pattern, that is, beliefs which are derived from convictions resulting from direct observations. Thus Passmore can say: "The question he really has before him is not 'What is believing?' but rather this: 'Granted that our impressions are "real," what else is "real"?'"<sup>37</sup> And Price is right when he says that Hume never treats of belief, as such, but always of one kind of

<sup>32</sup> *Treatise*, I, i, 1 (T, 1-2).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, I, i, 1 (T, 1-2 and 6); I, i, 7 (T 19); I, ii, 1 (T, 27); etc.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, I, i, 1 (T, 2); I, i, 7 (T, 19).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 5 (T, 86).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 7 (T, 96).

<sup>37</sup> *Hume's Intentions*, p. 100.

belief, limiting it to the inductively learned cause-effect type of belief, which his billiard ball example typifies.<sup>38</sup> It is this concentration on inferential certitudes which encourages Kemp Smith to suggest "*de facto* awareness" as a mean between belief and knowledge,<sup>39</sup> and leads G. E. Moore to think that Hume means to say that we *know* objects of direct observation.<sup>40</sup>

Despite this ambiguity Hume tries valiantly to explain what he means by the feeling which is belief. He says that conceiving a proposition and believing it cannot differ by their content—the imaginary horse and its real counterpart are perfect twins. The only difference must be in "the *manner* of our conceiving them,"<sup>41</sup> and this must be a difference of feeling. Insofar as Hume is saying that we can distinguish in our consciousness between the state of mind in which we think about an imaginary horse and that in which we think about one which is real (existing), what he says is clear enough. But whether we should call this difference one of feeling is a different question. The primary analogate of feeling is sensation, and especially the sensations of pain and pleasure. Since this is so, Hume is lured into the trap of thinking that belief is on almost the same level as having a toothache or enjoying a chocolate bar. He says in so many words that belief is "a species of sensation,"<sup>42</sup> and that it is "more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures."<sup>43</sup> Conversely, however, if belief is feeling, can reason be anything else? The logic of Hume's thought allows him no real distinction between the two, and so at the end of the first book of the *Treatise* he admits that he must avow that reason, too, is only feeling.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Hume's Theory of the External World* (Oxford, 1940), p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 356.

<sup>40</sup> *Philosophical Studies* (London, 1922), p. 148cq.

<sup>41</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 7 (T, 96).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* I, iii, 8 (T, 103).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 1 (T, 183).

<sup>44</sup> "After the most accurate and exact of my reasonings, I can give no reason why I shou'd assent to it; and feel nothing but a *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view, under which they appear to me." I, iv, 7 (T, 265).



In the Appendix to the *Treatise* Hume admits to dissatisfaction with his descriptions of belief,<sup>45</sup> and tries again to clarify the notion of belief. He says there that it is "impossible to explain perfectly this feeling or manner of conception,"<sup>46</sup> but he feels that there is no better answer than the one he had given in the body of the *Treatise*. His difficulty is only that of giving a clear description of the feeling which is belief. He sees nothing wrong with making belief a kind of sensation, nor even with reducing reason to feeling. It is merely a question of how to formulate his description.

Such hesitations, however, did nothing to shake Hume's conviction that he had hit upon the explanation of how belief works. This is the theme of the third part of the first book of the *Treatise*. The importance of this discussion is all too easily overlooked, for it is in elaborating the mechanism of belief that Hume makes the concessions which lead him into the sceptical impasse of the fourth part of the first book.

When we speak of the mechanism of belief, we are of necessity talking about beliefs of the inferential type, since non-inferential belief in an impression of sense or memory can be only a brute fact. In such belief, impressions are more forceful and so accepted as real. We cannot question how this happens, but only accept it as a fact.<sup>47</sup> The mechanism of belief, on the other hand, is designed to take us beyond our actual impressions and beyond the objects of memory to the object of the "judgment."<sup>48</sup> For it is judgment which "peoples the world, and brings us acquainted with such existences, as by their removal in time and place, lie beyond the reach of the senses and memory."<sup>49</sup> By means of judgment we build up our world and give it a history. And the mechanism of belief is the system of connections and inferences by which we construct this world.

Hume first explains the mechanism of belief in the context

<sup>45</sup> Appendix to *Treatise* (T, 628).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 629).

<sup>47</sup> *Treatise*, I, 1, 2 (T, 7); I, iii, 5 (T, 84); I, iv, 2 (T, 190); etc.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 9 (T, 108).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

of his discussion of our reasonings concerning cause and effect. The role of association and custom in the formation of our beliefs is too well known for us to need to spend much time explaining how they operate.<sup>50</sup> But it is important to note a gradual change which Hume makes in his explanations. Early in the discussion he tells us that belief "arises immediately, without any new operation of the reason or imagination,"<sup>51</sup> and is nothing but "a species of sensation."<sup>52</sup> As he goes on, Hume has to make room for beliefs which arise from a single experience. To justify such beliefs he appeals to a custom which is produced "in an oblique and artificial manner,"<sup>53</sup> and supplements our single experience. This means that we subsume our present experience under the general law, "that like objects, plac'd in like circumstances, will always produce like effects."<sup>54</sup> We have "many millions [of experiments] to convince us" of the validity of this principle, "and as this principle has established itself by sufficient custom, it bestows an evidence and firmness on any opinion to which it can be applied."<sup>55</sup>

We may wonder whether association can work in such a complicated way with these beliefs and make the proper generalization, but the task becomes even more difficult when Hume admits that we have unjustified beliefs. For

a present impression and a customary transition are now no longer necessary to enliven our ideas. Every chimera of the brain is as vivid and intense as any of those inferences, which we formerly dignified with the name of conclusions concerning matters of fact, and sometimes as the present impressions of the senses.<sup>56</sup>

This is perhaps an exaggeration, for in the Appendix Hume gives a new paragraph to be inserted at this point. In it he suggests that there is a great difference between poetical enthusiasm and serious conviction, and that "the great difference in their feeling proceeds in some measure from reflexion

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Treatise*, I, iii, 8 (*T*, 99sq.) for Hume's discussion of this.

<sup>51</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 8 (*T*, 102).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* (*T*, 103).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* (*T*, 105).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 10 (*T*, 123).

and *general rules*.”<sup>57</sup> Yet how association and custom could make use of reflexion and general rules he does not say.

From this point on Hume's custom and association become very intelligent. Besides being able to use general rules, they can also weigh the probabilities of chances and causes,<sup>58</sup> apply a set of rules by which to judge of causes and effects,<sup>59</sup> and direct the instinctive activity of animals.<sup>60</sup> It is true, of course, that it is in these discussions that Hume puts the most extreme demands on association in its most mechanical form, and it is here that his appeals to association have the least plausibility.<sup>61</sup> However, the striking thing is that insofar as association explains why we believe in such situations, it involves a reflective process which is much more than the associative mechanism which Hume had in mind when he began his discussion of belief. Now we have rules for evaluating evidence and for determining whether to accept testimony and other evidence which is insufficient, of itself, to produce the associative type of belief. In a word, association has become intelligent.

Another supplement to the associative mechanism appears in Hume's frequent appeals to native “propensities” of the mind to explain various features of his theory of belief. The gradual introduction of these tendencies is one of the most significant features of Hume's thought, for it shows how feeble association is without outside help.

Hume's first propensity is innocent enough. It is simply “that propensity, which custom produces, to pass from an object to its usual attendant.”<sup>62</sup> The next propensity is less obviously legitimate and considerably more ambiguous. It is

<sup>57</sup> Appendix to the *Treatise* (T, 631).

<sup>58</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 11 and 12 (T, 124sq.).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 15 (T, 173sq.).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 16 (T, 176sq.).

<sup>61</sup> Two extreme examples are (1) our expectation that nineteen out of twenty ships will return from a voyage because one in twenty have been lost on other voyages, and (2) our stopping short of a river because of the association between water, sinking, and suffocation. (*Treatise*, I, iii, 11 (T, 134) and I, iii, 8 (T, 103-04)). The applications of association here are ingenious but hardly plausible.

<sup>62</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 14 (T, 165).



the tendency of the mind to "spread itself on external objects, and to conjoin with them any internal impressions they occasion, and which always make their appearance at the same time that these objects discover themselves to the senses."<sup>63</sup> We are already far from mere differences of force and vivacity in ideas. But we are only beginning. To explain why we postulate a greater regularity in objects than we find in our perceptions Hume finds a new propensity, a kind of inertia of the imagination, which "when set into any train of thinking, is apt to continue even when its object fails it. . . ."<sup>64</sup> Even this, however, while it fills all the "gaps,"<sup>65</sup> does not explain our attribution of identity to the stream of perceptions. To accomplish this Hume finds it "a general rule that whatever ideas place the mind in the same disposition or in similar ones, are very apt to be confounded."<sup>66</sup> This still tells us only why we "feign" continued existence. To get actual belief Hume appeals to yet another propensity:

The mind falls so easily from one perception to the other, that it scarce perceives the change, but retains in the second a considerable share of the vivacity of the first. It is excited by the lively impression; and this vivacity is convey'd to the related idea . . . by reason of the smooth transition and the propensity of the imagination.<sup>67</sup>

It is because of this that we accept the continued existence of body.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, this propensity is so strong that we transfer the vivacity even to objects "which are perfectly new to us, and even of whose constancy and coherence we have no experience,"<sup>69</sup> and beyond this even to objects of which we have no present impression from which to transfer the vivacity.<sup>70</sup> These propensities would seem enough to construct

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, (T, 167).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 2 (T, 198).

<sup>65</sup> Professor Price suggests this term in *Hume's Theory of the External World*, p. 33 and uses it to advantage throughout his book.

<sup>66</sup> *Treatise*, I, iv, 2 (T, 203). At other times Hume tells us that we cannot be mistaken about the nature of our perceptions. Cf. *ibid.* (T, 190).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 208).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 209).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 210).

almost anything we would wish, but Hume adds a final tendency which lets us add even new *relations*. "We have a strong propensity to compleat every union [of ideas] by joining new relations to those which we have before observ'd betwixt ideas."<sup>71</sup>

The upshot of all this is that Hume "can now draw upon an unsystematized list of propensities, gradually accumulated in the course of the *Treatise*; without their aid the associative 'cement' would immediately crumble into sand."<sup>72</sup> But the help which Hume gets from these propensities is counter-balanced by the harm they do, opening as they do the door to all sorts of illegitimate beliefs. In fact, in the final stage they reduce everything, even understanding and reason, to instinct; for Hume finds that "reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct of our souls."<sup>73</sup> And at the end of the first book of the *Treatise* he confesses:

After the most accurate and exact of my reasonings, I can give no reason why I shou'd assent to it; and feel nothing but a *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view under which they appear to me. . . . The memory, senses, and understanding are therefore, all of them founded on the imagination or the vivacity of our ideas.<sup>74</sup>

We have come a long way from custom and association.

The development of Hume's thought would seem to be something like this: He formulates his theory of belief as a transfer of force and vivacity of ideas by means of custom and association, but soon finds that it is much too narrow to include all our beliefs. *De facto*, we do go beyond "experience," especially in the narrow sense of "experience" to which Hume wants to restrict himself when he is faithful to his theory of ideas. At the very least we think of perceptions as continuing to exist, which is sometimes for Hume to consider a series of perceptions as one. And to consider a series of perceptions as one, we need a propensity variously explained. He finds, too,

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 217).

<sup>72</sup> Passmore, *Hume's Intentions*, p. 120.

<sup>73</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 16 (T, 179).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 7 (T, 265).

that other relations besides causality, especially resemblance and contiguity, influence our belief, and he has to call for a new propensity to explain how they work. But this puts him in the position of affirming contradictions in our perceptions, for we affirm multiplicity and identity. To avoid this we have a new propensity by which we affirm the multiplicity of perceptions and the identity of objects. Thus it is that these propensities, which were at first intended to supplement Hume's basic associative mechanism of belief now usurp the field. They decide what is true and what is false (or rather what is to be taken as true and what it to be taken as false). Association becomes the tool of these propensities and Hume has to finish with the half-despairing admission that all our mental processes are directed by an unexplainable overall propensity.

We began by saying that Hume says almost too much about belief. We can see now that he does in fact say too much about it, for in the course of his discussion belief has shifted its meaning to include all sorts of certitudes, many of which we would normally call "rational," and Hume's associative mechanism is soon left behind for a system of propensities which govern his transfer of vivacity. Hume continues to talk about vivacity of impressions, but as we go on, it becomes more and more clear that it is question of seeing reasons and not of transferring vivacity. To speak of transference of vivacity in the context of Hume's multiple propensities is to reduce it to the level of a "gimmick," which can be manipulated as occasion requires.

The conclusion of the present section, then, must be that Hume did not succeed in distinguishing or describing knowing and believing. In the end he is unable to keep the two separate, and just as relations of ideas had the awkward tendency of turning into matters of fact, so knowledge becomes confused with belief. Belief becomes so reasonable as to be indistinguishable from knowledge, and knowledge turns out to be the product of a faculty which operates just as irrationally as the faculty which produces belief. In fact, it is the one faculty, the imagination, which is at work in both.



## III

We now have to consider the bearing of all this on the two types of scepticism which appear in Hume's *Treatise*. We can do this best by pointing out how Hume's thought on knowledge and belief undergoes radical changes in the course of the third and fourth parts of the first book. In these two parts of the *Treatise*, as we have seen, Hume runs the full gamut from a complete separation of belief from knowledge to a practical confusion of the two. Once this confusion is made, Hume finds that he has to apply the same criteria to both knowledge and belief. Then he sees that he cannot be sceptical about one without being sceptical about the other.

Before we see how this comes about and why, it will be valuable to lay down a few principles of criticism. We have mentioned Hume's naturalism, and the contrast between natural and philosophical certitudes. Kemp Smith has certainly done a great service by showing the importance of this naturalism and Hume's dependence on Hutcheson.<sup>75</sup> And his explanation of the contrast between the adaptivity of instinct, derived from Hutcheson, and the more mechanical association, derived from Newton,<sup>76</sup> has become a commonplace of Hume criticism. So, too, has the suggestion that in turning belief into "feeling," Hume has taken Hutcheson's use of feeling in moral judgments and extended it to all belief.<sup>77</sup> But the contrast between the influences of Newton and Hutcheson has been so much emphasized that commentators have tended to overlook the development of Hume's thought in the first half of the third part of Book One of the *Treatise*, where he transforms Hutcheson's moral sense into a Newtonian associative process. The fact that he does this shows that he did not see the contrast between the two. And to the end he does not seem to have seen

<sup>75</sup> Cf. his *Philosophy of David Hume*, especially the second chapter.

<sup>76</sup> On Hume's aspirations to be the Newton of the "moral sciences" and his ambition to make association play the role there which gravitation played in Newtonian mechanics, see Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, chapter three, and Passmore, *Hume's Intentions*, chapter six.

<sup>77</sup> Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 8 sq.

that the two cannot work together. So, when Kemp Smith thinks that the Newtonian element is recessive,<sup>78</sup> I believe that he is misled by the gradual transformation of the belief mechanism from an automatic, mechanical process to the reasoned consideration, bolstered by various propensities, into which we have seen it transformed. Hume, I would suggest, thought that this was the fulfillment of his Newtonian associative process rather than the substitution of a new Hutchesonian process. That succeeding thinkers, less infatuated with the idea of association, have found that the instinct-propensity elements will not fit in with the basic associative process, does not all show that Hume was aware of the difficulty or that it had any conscious influence on the structure of his thought.

Another point which we must keep in mind is the opposition between instinct and reason. Passmore, perhaps more clearly than anyone else, has seen the importance of this. He rightly insists that Hume wants to make his belief-connections purely psychological and instinctive, and to keep them independent of formal logical connections.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the psychology which Hume uses tends to be mechanistic.<sup>80</sup> Passmore shows why it is impossible to do away with all formal relations.<sup>81</sup> And since it is impossible, Hume's belief, whether he likes it or not, must be reasonable, to some extent at least.

Given these preliminaries, let us work our way through the third and fourth parts of the first book of the *Treatise* to see what happens and where Hume is led. The third part is entitled, "Of Knowledge and Probability," but knowledge is disposed of in one short section,<sup>82</sup> so confident is Hume of the clarity of this half of the disjunction. When he passes to probability, his discussion begins with a study of the inferences from cause to effect. The whole point of the succeeding sections

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>79</sup> *Hume's Intentions*, p. 27.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. for example: *Treatise*, I, iii, 8 (T, 103-04); I, iii, 11 (T, 128-30); and I, iii, 12 (T, 134).

<sup>81</sup> *Hume's Intentions*, chapter two, "The Critic of Formal Logic."

<sup>82</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 1 (T, 69 cq.).

is to show that the seemingly reasonable inferences involved in causal connections cannot possibly be the work of "reason." By the time Hume reaches section seven, this point is well established:

Reason can never satisfy us that the existence of any object does ever imply that of another; so that when we pass from the impression of one to the idea or belief of another, we are not determin'd by *reason* but by *custom* or a *principle of association*.<sup>83</sup>

In section eight the disjunction is just as neat: "Thus probable reason is nothing but a species of sensation."<sup>84</sup> The contrast between understanding and belief could hardly be clearer.

At this point Hume has found what he set out to seek in his decision to "beat about all the neighboring fields,"<sup>85</sup> but he feels that he should "turn the subject on every side, in order to find some new point of view from which we may illustrate and confirm such extraordinary and such fundamental principles."<sup>86</sup> Confidently he proceeds in his attempt to produce every argument and remove every objection. But as he goes on, unlooked-for consequences appear and important modifications are made. Thus, early in section nine Hume faces the objection that resemblance and contiguity, as principles of association, should produce belief just as causation does. His answer is a bit disconcerting. They *do* produce belief, but such belief is to be rejected because it results from credulity or education.<sup>87</sup> But Hume has admitted the existence of invalid beliefs. This is the nose of the camel under the tent. If belief is a species of sensation, an automatic associative process, why is not one belief as good as another? Hume's solution is a surreptitious appeal to experience as the norm of our beliefs.<sup>88</sup> But whatever principle he uses to distinguish between the two types of belief, Hume is faced with two sets of beliefs and he has to find some way to choose between them. His first tack is to say that one

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 7 (T, 97) my emphasis.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 8 (T, 103).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 2 (T, 78).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 9 (T, 106-07).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 110-17).

<sup>88</sup> For the proof and discussion of this see Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, pp. 382-83.



set of them is "contrary to reason."<sup>89</sup> He continues this line of thought in section ten, asserting that "truth" feels different from falsehood when presented directly to our imagination, and that we assent to other ideas not so directly presented insofar as they "supply its place, and give equal entertainment to the imagination."<sup>90</sup> Hume still sees no difficulty in distinguishing truth from falsehood.

In section eleven and twelve ("Of the probability of chances," and "Of the probability of causes") he continues to use his mechanistic explanation of the increased vivacity of ideas, which produces (or is) belief, but it becomes increasingly obvious that he is talking about the way in which we *calculate* probabilities.<sup>91</sup> This introduces reflective consideration, which becomes even more marked in the next section (section thirteen), "Of unphilosophical probability," in which Hume explains that the many intermediary links in historical evidence are of the *same kind*, and so

a long chain of argument has as little effect in diminishing the original vivacity, as a much shorter would have if compos'd of parts which were different from each other, and of which each requir'd a *distinct consideration*.<sup>92</sup>

He tells us, too, that "general rules, which we form *rashly* to ourselves,"<sup>93</sup> give an illegitimate certitude. But here, too, conscious decision plays a part, though Hume insists that the reasoning follows his associative pattern.

The ambiguity which has been developing strikes us very forcibly in section fifteen, in which Hume lists the rules by which we should judge of causes and effects. These are quite plainly rules to be applied after conscious deliberation, and are a far cry from the associative mechanism given earlier in the third part. Hume talks now of carefully applied "experiments," which require "the utmost sagacity to choose the right way among so many that present themselves."<sup>94</sup> The process has

<sup>89</sup> *Treatise*, I, iii, 9 (T, 117).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 10 (T, 121).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 11 (T, 124sq.).

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 13 (T, 146) my emphasis.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, my emphasis.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 15 (T, 175).

become so reasonable that in the next section (section sixteen) Hume sees that it coincides with reason and that thus reason itself is an instinct:

To consider the matter aright, reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations. This instinct, 'tis true, arises from past observation and experience; but can any-one give the ultimate reason why past experience and observation produces such an effect any more than why nature alone should produce it?<sup>95</sup>

Ostensibly, Hume is reducing reason to instinct, but notice that it is to instinct in a very special sense—in many ways an instinct which is *learned*. It would be interesting to see how Hume would fit such an instinct into his basic causal pattern. To do so would require clever tailoring both of reason and of the associative mechanism to make them fit together. Hume might continue to insist that this "reason" is nothing but sensation, but it would be a queer type of sensation.

The type of problem which Hume has been discussing in the third part of the first book has kept him from worrying about complete scepticism. And despite the fact that he has cut the ground from under his distinction between natural and philosophical certitudes, he has no doubts about either and considers them as independent of each other. As he passes to the fourth part of the first book, the atmosphere is completely changed. In his preoccupation with new problems he seems to forget about his associative machinery.

In the very first section he proposes the much discussed reduction of all our certitudes to probability and thence to scepticism.<sup>96</sup> The skeleton of the argument is this: Although the rules of the demonstrative sciences are certain, our faculties which apply these rules are fallible, therefore we can never have complete certitude about any application of them. But this conclusion is also the work of our fallible faculties, therefore we

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 16 (T, 179).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 1 (T, 180sq.).

are less sure of it than we thought. These reflective judgments continue, each diminishing the probability of its predecessor, until we reach "a total extinction of belief and evidence."<sup>97</sup> A full discussion of all the difficulties in this proof would take us too far afield; it is enough if we indicate that, whatever else is involved, Hume sees now that knowledge in the strict sense is impossible, for there is knowledge only when someone knows, and that someone knows is a matter of fact and could be otherwise. This is the point of bringing in the fallibility of our faculties. And with the state of the question is changed completely. In the third part Hume was content with deflating the ambitions of reason. Now he finds that there is no such thing as reason, that any certitude is a natural certitude and that reflection undermines every one of these natural certitudes.

The importance of all this for our present discussion is that Hume thinks it necessary to *justify* our natural certitudes. This shows how he has changed the problem. Earlier abstract reason was incapable of criticizing our natural certitudes. Now since belief and knowledge have been fused into one, reason can undermine our beliefs. For the moment, Hume finds a way out of this difficulty with a new disjunction. Direct judgments are now opposed to reflective judgments, instead of natural judgments to philosophical judgments. Here direct judgments are valid of themselves and cannot be justified. Reflex judgments seek to go beyond experience and so cause scepticism. Thus he explains why the sceptical arguments have no lasting influence and assigns the force of natural (i. e., direct) judgments to their connaturality which holds our minds except when we are actually studying the sceptical arguments.<sup>98</sup> This, however, reduces them to the status of *de facto* certitudes, which cannot be given a *de jure* status. So far this causes no difficulty because Hume is satisfied with the *de facto* character of our natural certitudes, as long as he can still play off instinct in our direct judgments against reason in our reflective judgments. Thus, while he is willing to let belief be very reasonable and reduce knowledge to

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 188).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 185-86).

a kind of belief, nevertheless by opposing direct to reflex judgments, he can retain the rationality versus irrationality disjunction which is necessary to his limited scepticism. Irrational direct judgments now give certitude, rational reflection leads to scepticism, and there can be no rational justification of our direct certitudes.

In the second section: "Of scepticism with regard to the senses," the situation is quite different. Hume there wants to determine "the *causes* which induce us to believe in the existence of body."<sup>99</sup> In the early sections of the third part such a question could not even have been raised, let alone discussed. There we could not get behind our beliefs. Now, however, Hume has a whole set of beliefs about beliefs. But even if we grant him these, what right does reason (or reflective belief, as it is now) have to ask for more than a mere description of which state follows which in the causal inferences? How can reason decide that it is the imagination and not the senses or itself which makes us believe in bodies? It would seem that Hume is asking for a reasonable explanation of belief. Thus far he has been able to disguise the reasonableness of belief by contrasting it with understanding. Now, however, he finds two sets of beliefs which are in conflict. His causal investigation of why we believe brings him to the contrast between the natural system of perception-objects<sup>100</sup> and the philosophical system of beliefs, which distinguishes the world of objects from that of our perceptions.<sup>101</sup> Hume finds that the relation between these two systems is similar to that between the natural and sceptical attitudes of the previous section. The natural system is that of the unreflective man, the philosophical is held by the philosopher in his study.<sup>102</sup> Hume sees the conflict as a struggle between nature and reason:

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 2 (T, 187-88).

<sup>100</sup> Hume claims that the man in the street confuses perceptions and objects. Cf. *Treatise*, I, iv, 2 (T, 192-93) and above p. 425.

<sup>101</sup> *Treatise*, I, iv, 2 (T, 216).

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 216).



Nature is obstinate and will not quit the field, however strongly attacked by reason; and at the same time reason is so clear in the point that there is no possibility of disguising her. Not being able to reconcile these two enemies, we endeavor to set ourselves at ease as much as possible, by successively granting to each whatever it demands. . . .<sup>103</sup>

But reason is no longer just understanding; it now includes the reason involved in causal inferences, the reason which was supposed to be belief and a species of sensation.<sup>104</sup>

The real opposition is between instinctive, direct beliefs and reasonable, reflective beliefs. Hume cannot find a way to decide between them; he falls into contradiction no matter which side he takes. He concludes that we cannot be fully convinced of the truth of either of the two systems, because if we were, "we shou'd never run into " the opposite opinion, as we so obviously do.<sup>105</sup>

Hume is more than a little bewildered by the predicament in which he has become involved. He confesses his surprise at the turn events have taken:

I begun this subject with premising that we ought to have an implicit faith in our senses, and that this would be the conclusion I shou'd draw from the whole of my reasoning. But to be ingenuous, I feel myself *at present* of a quite contrary sentiment, and am more inclin'd to repose no faith at all in my senses, or rather imagination, than to place in it such an implicit confidence. I cannot conceive how such trivial qualities of the fancy, conducted by such false suppositions, can ever lead to *any solid and rational system*.<sup>106</sup>

With this it is clear that Hume has hopelessly rationalized his beliefs and has lost not only the neatness (deceptive though it was) of his knowledge-belief disjunction, but also many of the certitudes he could have as long as he kept causal inference and understanding separate.

The remaining five sections of Part Four are hardly more than

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 215).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iii, 8 (T, 103).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 2 (T, 215).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 217), my emphasis in the last sentence.

applications of the principle which Hume sets down in the first two. Substance, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, personal identity, and the immateriality of the soul are all banished as unreasonable. But they refuse to go into exile. If they are fictitious, so are our most natural beliefs, for they all are built on our unstable imagination. Hume has fallen between two stools. Is he to follow reason or imagination? Reason entirely subverts itself and all evidence.<sup>107</sup> But imagination, which is the only alternative he sees, is acceptable only as proved so by reason.<sup>108</sup> "We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all."<sup>109</sup> Hume is trapped by the rationality from which he had hoped to escape.

To recapitulate, Hume's limited scepticism—the conviction that our causal inferences are natural certitudes and cannot be justified by reason—is dependent on the distinctions between belief and knowledge and between matters of fact and relations of ideas. Hume, however, in his attempt to explain how belief works, breaks down these distinctions, on the one hand reducing all knowledge to belief by making it instinctive, and on the other demanding that the explanation of belief be a reasonable explanation. This gives him two sets of beliefs between which he is unable to choose, and it makes him admit that belief is no longer non-rational, as he had desired, but irrational. Hence every thinking man, at least as long as he is studying the problem, must be a complete sceptic.

This is the logic of Hume's thought, and in the *Treatise* he can find no escape from it. Hence Hume's conclusion to the first book of the *Treatise* is a lame sort of plea. Philosophy gets him nowhere, it gives no satisfactory answers and cannot even impose its sceptical conclusions.<sup>110</sup> But Hume feels that he "would be a loser in point of pleasure,"<sup>111</sup> if he were to give up philosophy. This modest plea for philosophy is a far cry from Hume's earlier confident boast:

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 7 (T, 267-68).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 268).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* (T, 268-69).

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, I, iv, 7 (T, 191-92).

In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.<sup>112</sup>

The shining apple of a science of human nature<sup>113</sup> has turned to dust.

### CONCLUSION

The puzzling inconsistencies of Hume's thought make it difficult to draw any positive conclusions from his ambivalent scepticism. Once the latent ambiguities are brought to light and his almost open contradictions are juxtaposed, one wonders how any one could set Hume up as a guide in philosophy. The empiricist can feel sympathy with his radical and almost fierce empiricism, and the weary student of the history of philosophy can admire Hume's ruthless debunking of his philosophical ancestors, but anyone who studies the *Treatise* closely should see that such sympathy and admiration have an emotional rather than philosophical basis. Hume's arguments, like those of the sophists of old, dazzle the *reader* and tend to amaze him, but the *student* will see that Hume's arguments are built on the sands of ambiguity and contradiction. This perhaps explains why Hume has many followers and admirers but no school. The more intelligent of his friends, men with keen minds like Passmore,<sup>114</sup> pick his arguments to pieces. Then, unable to salvage a doctrine, they see in Hume the embodiment of the critical spirit, the mind which will "take no system as final, nothing as ultimate except the spirit of enquiry."<sup>115</sup> It seems to me that such a statement contains an important warning—namely, that since the human mind loves to jump to conclusions long before all the evidence is in, the best philosophers will be the most cautious, wary not to go beyond the evidence. However, our study of Hume's double scepticism would indicate that Hume was one of the least cautious of thinkers and had an

<sup>112</sup> Introduction to the *Treatise* (T, xx).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* (T, xix).

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Hume's Intentions*.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

inordinate attachment to sweeping statements. In a word, if the Humean spirit is the spirit of enquiry, Hume was one of the least Humean of philosophers. To be sure, he was a revolutionary, but like most revolutionaries he was a young man in a hurry and one of the least able to follow his own counsels. Because of this it would seem that the value of Hume's scepticism has been much over-rated. It is not even the *reductio ad absurdum* of Locke and Berkeley, which it is often claimed to be, but a too enthusiastic generalization resulting from an incomplete analysis of the psychological and epistemological factors involved, abetted by a passion for a simplicity, which unfortunately is not found in human cognition. There is room for scepticism, but for the scepticism which refuses to accept pat answers to the problems raised by the complexity of human knowledge and beliefs. To such an enquiring mind Hume's scepticism will look like just another pat answer. There are few easy answers in philosophy, and Hume's sceptical theory is not one of them.

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## THOMISM AND POSITIVISM

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**I**N a report on the Eleventh International Congress of Philosophy which took place in Brussels, Walter Cerf makes the comment that,

Against the great mass of nondescript contributions, three grand currents of contemporary thought are easily recognizable: the empiricist, the existentialist, and the Catholic currents. The empiricist current is mainly British, American and Scandinavian; the existentialist, on the whole, Continental and South American; and only Catholicism is represented internationally, although its main strength is in France, Germany and Italy. Catholicism always surprises the outsider, not only with the variety of views permissible within its dogmatic framework, but also with the energy it exhibits in assimilating to itself the main tendencies of modern thought and science. At the moment though, existentialism is its favorite partner.<sup>1</sup>

It is, of course, very flattering to the Catholic to find that his activities are judged by others to be on an international scale, and he can modestly point out to his interlocutors that, etymologically, the word "catholic" means "universal," which latter word is not a very far cry in meaning from "international."

No doubt Mr. Cerf's hint that Catholic thinkers in Europe have made more of a *rapprochement* with existentialist thought than have their English-speaking brethren with the current empiricism will be generally admitted. Yet it cannot be denied that the influence exerted by the positivist current of thought in English-speaking universities merits for it more attention from Catholic thinkers than it always receives.

The humble aim of this article is to suggest certain fields in which the thought of St. Thomas and that of at least one influential brand of positivism might meet on common ground. I also try to point out some important points in which these two philosophies differ, and why they do so. Perhaps the

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophical Review*, LXIV, 2 (April 1955), 294-295.

following judgment delivered by John Burnheim will provide some justification for these exploratory paragraphs:

Finally we must not let it escape us that there is a fundamental objection to metaphysics which is independent of the particular arguments we have been examining, and which is the driving force of the whole attack on metaphysics. Nobody, in the opinion of most contemporary philosophers, has ever devised a method whereby the truth or falsehood of metaphysical propositions can be determined with accuracy. Unless it can be shown that there is a methodology which is quite as precise and well grounded as the methodology involved in the positions we have been analysing (namely, the positivist positions), the anti-metaphysical trend of contemporary English-speaking philosophy will continue to rest secure, no matter what be the fate of the other arguments on which it is based. The importance, the urgency, and the difficulty of meeting this challenge must not be underestimated. It is not only the most radical, but also the most legitimate challenge that metaphysics has ever had to face.<sup>2</sup>

Now, owing to the fact that some of the researches into mathematical logic have been made by thinkers of a positivistic bias, there has developed among some Catholic philosophers a belief that mathematical logic itself is inimical to metaphysics. Such a belief is, of course, as unfortunate as a belief that mathematical studies are pagan, since the Pythagoreans, the founders of mathematics, were adherents of the Orphic religion. Any dangers to metaphysics to be found in positivistic thought are to be found in their theory of knowledge rather than in the relatively innocent and interesting studies that some of them have made in the foundations of mathematics and in symbolic logic.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "The Modern Attack on Metaphysics," *Philosophical Studies* II (June 1952), 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> In this connection it is instructive to compare the attitude towards symbolic logic taken by Jacques Maritain (cf. his *Introduction to Logic*, N. Y. 1946, pp. 222-233), with that taken by Lukasiewicz (cf. for example, his *Aristotle's Syllogistic* . . . , Oxford, 1951 and "In Memoriam Jan Lukasiewicz," by Boleslaw Sobocinski, *Philosophical Studies*, December 1956, pp. 3-49). A comparison of such books as *Ancient Formal Logic*, by I. M. Bochenski, O.P. (Amsterdam, 1951), *Medieval Logic*, by P. Boehner, O.F.M. (Manchester University Press, 1952),

Both positivism and its Continental contemporary, existentialism, were reactions against Hegelian metaphysics. Both of these reactions accepted Hegelianism at its word as being *the* metaphysics; and in rejecting it, they tended to reject all metaphysics.<sup>4</sup> It was for the same general reason that these two philosophies rejected Hegelianism, namely, for the reason that in the latter system, the world of our experience got lost in a cloud of intangible ideas. The existentialist stressed the self of experience faced with its problems of relating itself to existence *as experienced*. The positivist, on the other hand, was interested in the validity of our knowledge, and stressed in his turn the world of *experience* as being the sole source of our knowledge of things, and therefore the sole criterion of the informative character of our statements about things.

Whatever might be said about the vagaries of individual representatives of these two schools, it will, I think, be generally admitted that the reaction towards the concrete world was a healthy one. Of course, it is highly regrettable that there was no realist metaphysical system in good public standing at the time of these reactions in order to provide an acceptable alternative to the rationalism of Hegel and the various anti-rationalistic currents which sprang up against it.<sup>5</sup> In the words of Fr. Copleston:

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*Conventional Logic and Modern Logic*, by J. T. Clarke, S.J. (Woodstock, Md., 1952), or of the articles on logic appearing in *Dominican Studies* (1948-1954) and in *La Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, with the normal run of college textbooks on the "traditional scholastic" logic, reveals two extremely different mental climates existing among those who claim adherence to the scholastic tradition in logic.

<sup>4</sup> Though existentialism in fact does have its metaphysicians, and the positivists have of late become less hostile to metaphysics, or at least less openly contemptuous of it.

<sup>5</sup> In his book of *Essays* entitled *Men and Tendencies* (1937), E. I. Watkin says: "That this realism has always been held by the Aristotelian philosophy accepted in the Catholic schools and is not necessarily materialism, but realism, of which materialism is but one variety, seems not to have entered the minds of the Marxists. For when Marxism arose this scholastic philosophy was almost universally discredited." (Essay on "The Philosophy of Marxism," p. 250): and "For Plekhanov that 'being determines thought' not *vice versa*, is the 'fundamental thesis of modern materialism' . . . It is in fact, the fundamental thesis of realism, and therefore, as Peter Lippert has pointed out, a fundamental principle of Catholic philosophy." (*Ibid.*, n. 1).

. . . it would have to be shown that 'empiricism' and 'rationalism' do not exhaust the possibilities and that we are not forced to choose either the one or the other. And I think that in Aquinas' philosophy we find an example of another possibility which is well worth examination. I do not mean to suggest that his philosophy can simply be taken over as it stands without development and without prolonged examination of his fundamental positions. I mean rather to suggest that it is an organism which is capable of growth and development of such a kind as to reconcile on a higher plane the sharp antitheses which have emerged in the subsequent history of philosophic thought.<sup>6</sup>

But St. Thomas' thought was more or less unknown at the time and is only now beginning to exercise some influence. Now in view of what Fr. Copleston says, it might be profitable to discuss some of the basic points in logical positivist thought, and to see how they relate to the philosophy of St. Thomas. And since Professor Ayer's book, *Language, Truth and Logic*, has achieved the status of a textbook of positivism, it will be convenient to use it in the following discussion.

In the ensuing paragraphs I will confine myself to certain basic characteristics of empiricism, namely, to verification, theory of analytic and synthetic propositions, and the semantics of poetry. These are crucial points in the positivist system, the first two, at any rate; and it stands or falls by them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Beginning with the classification of propositions, I think that St. Thomas would accept the division of all propositions into the analytic and synthetic variety, for he himself distinguishes propositions into those of accidental and those of essential predication, which amounts to the same thing. But he would certainly deny that all analytic propositions are non-factual. For example, he says that the proposition "God exists" is *per se notum* (i. e., analytic), since the predicate is the same as the subject; and he says that in the proposition "Man is an animal," the predicate is contained in the essence of the subject.<sup>7</sup> But he certainly does not intend to say that the propo-

<sup>6</sup> *Aquinas* (Pelican Books, 1954), p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> "... contingit aliquid esse per se notum dupliciter: uno modo secundum se, et,



sition "God exists" is uninformative about the real world. I believe that, for St. Thomas, all metaphysical propositions are analytic.<sup>8</sup> Yet there is no doubt that he considers metaphysics to be a study of real beings. We could illustrate St.

non quoad nos; alio modo secundum se, et quoad nos. Ex hoc enim aliqua propositio est per se nota, quod praedicatum includitur in ratione subjecti; ut *Homo est animal*; nam animal est de ratione hominis. . . . Dico ergo quod haec propositio, *Deus est*, quantum in se est, per se nota est; quia praedicatum est idem cum subjecto." *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Fr. Copleston in his *Aquinas* says: "Nowadays propositions which are claimed to be both necessary and informative are frequently called 'synthetic *a priori* propositions'; synthetic as giving information about reality and as not being purely formal, *a priori* as being necessary and universal. This term seems to me to be a convenient one." (p. 28, n. 1) He also says of the Principle of Causality: "Is it an empirical hypothesis or is it an instance of what might be now called a 'synthetic *a priori* proposition'?" Aquinas certainly understood it in the latter sense." (p. 40) Now leaving aside for the moment Fr. Copleston's own interpretation of the term *synthetic a priori*, if we take "synthetic" in its ordinary sense in logic, then synthetic propositions never have their predicates either identical with or included in the essence of the subject. But if this is the case, some difficulties will arise when we try to interpret the necessary and informative propositions of Thomistic metaphysics as being of the above description. For, as St. Thomas sees it, the proposition, *God exists*, has its predicate identical with its subject (see n. 7). In modern terminology, one would say that such a proposition was, if anything, analytic—certainly not synthetic, even with the *a priori* qualification added on. If we were to say that this proposition is *synthetic*, even though it were also admitted to be *a priori*, I fail to see how we could ever prove that God's essence is identical with His existence. For in such circumstances, the predicate "exists" will be outside the meaning or nature of the subject "God." On the other hand, however, if the proposition, *God exists*, is analytic then so presumably are all the other metaphysical propositions.

Furthermore the Aristotelian theory of the Predicables which St. Thomas also subscribed to, seems to exemplify the distinction between the analytic and synthetic propositions of modern positivism. The predicables of Genus, Difference and Property seem in fact to be a classification of the general types of analytic proposition; and the predicable of Accident seems to be identical with the class of synthetic propositions. St. Thomas himself seems to make this general distinction between the analytic and the synthetic types in the following passage: "Unde cum omne quod est praeter essentiam rei, dicatur accidens: esse quod pertinet ad questionem 'an est,' est accidens." (II *Quodl.*, q. 2, a. 1). He makes the same distinction by implication when indicating his views on the *propositio per se nota*. (See n. 7, and *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 1) I know of no context in which he mentions anything like a theory of synthetic *a priori* propositions, at least in the current acceptance of that term. And I fail to see how the positivist criticism of such a type of proposition can be answered.

Thomas' position from the example of the non-metaphysical but analytic proposition, "Man is an animal." He would say that it tells you of one of the essential characteristics that a man has; but it does not tell you whether there are any men in existence. Now if the positivists were to mean by "non-factual" *non-existential*, then I think that, with the exception of one class of proposition, St. Thomas would agree with them. He would say that propositions about what God is are exceptional as being necessarily existential, since God exists by His nature. But he would certainly admit that all other analytic propositions are non-existential. Yet positivists seem to wish to say of analytic propositions not only that they are non-existential, but that they do not refer to the actual world in any way at all, being merely the consequences of certain ways of defining terms. And it is here that I think the disagreement arises between their views and those of St. Thomas.

I would propose that a case can be made out for saying that the propositions of natural science at least *aim* at being analytic, namely, at arriving at necessary truth upon the given subject-matter; otherwise why should not a scientist be content with the first true proposition that comes into his head?

It would seem, for example, that the proposition "Water boils at a hundred degrees centigrade at sea-level," aims at being true for all possible cases of water, and that it would be true whether any water existed or not. If it were true for all possible cases, it would be analytic. Yet it would be ridiculous to say that this proposition was thereby uninformative about the physical world. On the contrary, it would be perfectly informative in its role as a scientific proposition, since it would inform you as to one of the universal characteristics of water. Of course, in such circumstances the fact that water existed or did not exist would be purely coincidental. The characteristics of water would in any case be the same. Whether the propositions of natural science ever reach the stage of being analytic, we need not ask here. The fact is that St. Thomas believed that metaphysical propositions did so. And he also maintained that they gave information about things, even though, with

respect to non-divine beings, they did not assert that they existed. In other words, the proposition that a non-divine being, a physical being for example, *exists*, was a proposition of accidental predication for St. Thomas, or in contemporary terminology, a synthetic proposition. It was not a metaphysical proposition in the full sense, but was part of the necessary "raw material" from which human knowledge of metaphysical truths took its origin.

It will be well here, before we inquire how it is possible to establish analytic propositions which are informative about things, to mention Professor Ayer's view that analytic propositions are tautologies. Now he uses the word "tautology" in a non-pejorative sense. It is, in fact, another word for "analytic," but it serves the useful purpose of bringing out the fact that the predicates of analytic propositions do nothing more than make explicit what is already contained within the nature of their subjects. They are in fact a repetition of the subject term. So in the proposition "One and one make two," the predicate "two" merely makes explicit what is already contained in the subject "one and one." St. Thomas will agree with this non-pejorative use of the word "tautology" in respect of analytic propositions, and he would admit that from a logical point of view, the whole of metaphysics and of theology (at least of the Divine attributes) consists of tautologies. But of course, from a psychological viewpoint he will deny this, just as Ayer will do. St. Thomas will say that only God knows all the possible truths about His nature, and that He knows them immediately; and he will say that only God and angels know without reasoning all the basic truths of metaphysics. His way of putting this is to distinguish between the proposition in itself and the proposition as known to us; and he says that because of the weakness of the human mind, many propositions which are in fact analytic are not immediately known by us to be such.<sup>9</sup> To take a crude example, a

<sup>9</sup> Cf. n. 7, and the following: "Dico ergo quod haec propositio, *Deus est*, quantum in se est, per se nota est. . . . Sed quia nos non scimus de Deo, quid est,

human being, in assenting to the axioms of Euclid, will not thereby be able immediately to understand all the theorems. But God, on the other hand, would be able to know both axioms and theorems in one act of understanding. Evidently then, for the Divine Mind, there is no problem of consistency and completeness. By one act of intellectual vision, God can see both consistency of axioms and the complete set of theorems derivable from those axioms. Speaking of derivation, or *reasoning* in traditional language, St. Thomas says,

our scientific knowledge contains both some perfection and some imperfection. Its certitude pertains to its perfection, for what is known scientifically is known with certainty. *To it imperfection belongs its progression from principles to the conclusions contained in that science*; for this progression happens only because the intellect, in knowing the premisses, knows the conclusions only potentially. If it actually knew the conclusions, there would be no need of it to go further, since motion is simply the passage from potency to act. Knowledge is said to be in God, therefore, because of its certitude about things known, but not because of the progression mentioned above, for, as Dionysius says, this is not found even in angels.<sup>10</sup>

We see, then, from this passage of St. Thomas, that he would have no objection to Professor Ayer's statement that all analytic propositions are tautologies in the non-pejorative sense; and he would include metaphysics under this heading of tautologous propositions.

To introduce the discussion on the methods by which we acquire the knowledge that we put into the form of analytic propositions we can profitably dispel here the belief that metaphysics is bound to be anti-empirical. As Fr. Copleston says:

it is a misconception to suppose that the fundamental role of sense-perception in human cognition was a discovery of the classical British empiricists. It had already been stated, and emphatically stated, by Aquinas in the thirteenth century. It is true that the latter was not the first to state it; for the doctrine was already

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non est nobis per se nota, sed indiget demonstrari per ea quae sunt magis nota quoad nos." *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4.



present in Aristotle. . . . Furthermore, in a sense Aquinas laid more stress than did the classical British empiricists on the part played by sense-perception in human cognition. For while not excluding introspection or reflection as a course of knowledge, he did not mention sense-perception and reflection as parallel sources of knowledge. He did not think that introspection or reflection is an initial source in the same sense in which sense-perception is. His point of view was that I become aware of my existence as a self through concrete acts of perceiving material things other than myself, inasmuch as I am concomitantly aware of these acts as mine.<sup>11</sup>

I think that this point can still profitably be stressed, since the tendency of positivists and empiricists in general has been to equate metaphysics with rationalism, and empiricism with the rejection of metaphysics. On the contrary, one can already see in St. Thomas a first adumbration of the principle of verification upon which the positivists lay so much stress. He says, for example: "Because the first principle of our knowledge is sense, it is necessary to reduce in some way to sense all things about which we judge."<sup>12</sup> It is not such a far cry from this to Professor Ayer's statement that: "We say that a sentence is factually significant to any given person, if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express—that is, if he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore St. Thomas would never agree with the Socrates of the *Phaedo* that we should leave the world of sense-experience and confine ourselves to the non-sensual regions of pure thought. No matter how far we go in the investigation of immaterial beings we can never, so thinks St. Thomas, do away with the use of sense-experience and images. To quote Fr. Copleston once more: "... it should be added that it is not only in the initial acquisition of knowledge that the mind depends on sense-experience.

<sup>11</sup> *Op cit.*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>12</sup> "Sed quia primum principium nostrae cognitionis est sensus, oportet ad sensum quodammodo resolvere omnia de quibus iudicamus." *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 3, ad 2: cf. also *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Language, Truth and Logic* (2nd, ed.), p. 35.

For he held that we cannot use the knowledge we have already acquired without the employment of images or 'phantasmata'; and images are the results of sense-perception."<sup>14</sup> As St. Thomas himself says: "For the mind actually to understand something there is required an act of the imagination and of other (sensitive) faculties not only in receiving fresh knowledge *but also in using knowledge already acquired*."<sup>15</sup> (my italics).

The question now arises as to how St. Thomas can build a metaphysical system when he starts from such an emphatically empiricist theory of knowledge. Why, in fact, is he not a logical positivist? I think that the beginnings of an answer to this question will appear if we investigate how Professor Ayer explains our learning mathematics and logic. Since mathematics and logic are, in Professor Ayer's view, sets of analytic propositions, it will be of some interest to see how he explains our learning them. That Professor Ayer thinks this to be a serious question is evident from the way in which he introduces it. He tells us that:

Where the empiricist does encounter difficulty is in connection with the truths of formal logic and mathematics, for whereas a scientific generalization is readily admitted to be fallible, the truths of mathematics and logic appear to everyone to be necessary and certain. But if empiricism is correct, no proposition which has factual content can be necessary or certain. Accordingly, the empiricist must deal with the truths of logic and mathematics in one of the two following ways: he must say either that they are not necessary truths, in which case he must account for the universal belief that they are; or he must say that they have no factual content, and then he must explain how a proposition which is empty of all factual content can be true and useful and surprising.

If neither of these courses proves satisfactory, we shall be obliged to give way to rationalism. We shall be obliged to admit that there are some truths about the world which we can know independently of experience. . . . *It is clear that any such concession to rationalism would upset the main argument of this book . . . the whole force of our attack on metaphysics would be destroyed*<sup>16</sup> (my italics).

<sup>14</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 7; cf. also *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 2, ad 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

I am going to suggest that we learn the basic proposition of metaphysics in the same general way as we learn those of mathematics and logic, making allowances for the differences in subject-matter. I will also suggest that Professor Ayer cannot succeed in explaining our knowledge of mathematics if he confines himself to his own principles. In order to explain this point I must quote his own words; and I justify this multiplication of quotations by pointing out that we are dealing here with the most crucial problem in the whole positivist system, namely, the positivist explanation of how we can learn the analytic propositions of mathematics and logic while yet not being able to learn anything meaningful in the field of metaphysics. Now Thomistic metaphysics consists of analytic propositions;<sup>17</sup> and Professor Ayer must show why it is possible to arrive at the one set of analytic propositions and yet impossible to acquire the other. The quotation we have just given from his work shows that Professor Ayer is himself aware of the vital importance of this issue.

He says: "It is obvious that mathematics and logic have to be learned in the same way as chemistry and history have to be learned. Nor are we denying that the first person to discover a given logical or mathematical truth was led to it by an inductive procedure."<sup>18</sup> This is a most important admission. He says explicitly that we learn mathematics by the same process as that which we learn the natural sciences, namely, by induction. Now just previous to this statement he says that: "The course of maintaining that the truths of logic and mathematics are not necessary or certain was adopted by Mill. He maintained that these propositions were inductive generalizations based on an extremely large number of instances."<sup>19</sup> One would have thought that it would be precisely Mill's interpretation of mathematics that Professor Ayer would accept, given his strong learnings towards Hume's inductive theories. Surely if we learn mathematics in the same general way in which we learn the natural sciences, and given that our

<sup>17</sup> Cf. n. 8.<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 74.<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

propositions in the natural sciences are only statements of probability, then so will be those of mathematics. Surely again, if we learn mathematics by induction, it follows, on the theory of induction from sense-experience accepted by Professor Ayer, that mathematics should be subject to the conditions governing all inductive propositions. They should then be only probable hypotheses. But this is not the conclusion that Professor Ayer draws. On the contrary, he says:

The contention of Mill's which we reject is that the propositions of logic and mathematics have the same status as empirical hypotheses; that their validity is determined in the same way. We maintain that they are independent of experience in the sense that they do not owe their validity to empirical verification. We may come to discover them through an inductive process; but *once we have apprehended them* we see that they are necessarily true, and that they hold good for every conceivable instance. And this serves to distinguish them from empirical generalizations. For we know that a proposition whose validity depends upon experience cannot be seen to be necessarily and universally true.<sup>20</sup>

I have italicised the phrase "once we have apprehended them" since it is the crucial point of the whole argument. How, given Ayer's principles, can we ever apprehend them as being necessarily true? How, starting off from inductive premisses, do we ever reach a necessarily true proposition? It is an assertion repeated almost *ad nauseam* by empiricists of the Humean-positivist school that inductive propositions have only probability value. If we learn mathematics by induction from sense-experience, then there is no question of whose theory to choose. Ayer is wrong and Mill is right. It would seem that Professor Ayer is half aware of this since he continues: "In rejecting Mill's theory, we are obliged to be somewhat dogmatic. We can do no more than state the issue clearly and then trust that his contention will be seen to be discrepant with the relevant logical facts. . . ." <sup>21</sup> Whether Mill's contention is discrepant with the logical facts or not, there is no question that he is consistent with his basic principles. Ayer is not.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



Mill gives a false description of mathematical propositions; but his description is in accordance with his basic theory of induction. Professor Ayer gives a correct description of mathematical propositions—at least insofar as he describes them as being necessarily true—but in doing so, he contradicts his own basic theory of induction. He is quite right in saying that by rejecting Mill's theory, he is obliged to be dogmatic, for, in the position in which he has placed himself he can give no good reason for rejecting Mill's theory. He had to choose either to remain consistent with his Humean theory of induction or to admit the irrefutable truth that mathematical propositions are necessarily true. He chose truth before consistency, which course, while being laudable from the ethical point of view, is in complete contradiction to his own premisses. Arithmetic is the Achilles heel of his and of any Humean-based theory.

Since we do learn the analytic propositions of mathematics and logic through the aid of sense-experience, our only recourse, if we wish to explain how we do it, is to posit some sort of intuitive induction. We will just have to say, and experience bears us out in this, that it is possible, after a certain amount of thinking on sense-experience, to arrive at certain propositions which are always true. This in general is the Aristotelian theory of intuitive inductions;<sup>22</sup> and given Ayer's double admission both that we learn arithmetic through sense-experience and that arithmetical propositions are analytic, I don't see how he can possibly fail to subscribe to it. But I can see why he should not want to do so. If he admits Aristotelian intuitive induction, he has left the door open to metaphysics. For, as he himself admits, it will now be possible, in principle at least, to arrive, from sense-experience, at propositions which are true for all possible beings. And this is what metaphysics is about. And this is what Professor Ayer does not wish to allow.

We might notice, in passing, that the failure of logical positivists to give a satisfactory explanation of our knowledge of mathematics is not unique in the history of philosophy. In

<sup>22</sup> *Post. Anal.*, II, c. 19.

fact it is almost a truism to say that the strength and weakness of a philosophical system are shown up when it sets itself to explain how we get to know the unsophisticated analytic propositions of arithmetic. The spectre of simple addition haunts the graveyards of philosophy. One of the reasons given by Plato for positing a state of pre-existence was the fact that we know some mathematics. We could not, according to him, have got to know it anywhere else. One need hardly say that there are various implications of such a theory which fail to recommend it to a large number of people. The historians tell us how Aristotle, himself possessing no pronounced learnings towards mathematics, had a busy time attacking both Plato and "those thinkers who reduce all philosophy to mathematics"; yet even he has not escaped completely free from energetic criticism of his own theory of "mathematical being."<sup>23</sup> In the early medieval period St. Augustine, for example, offered as a proof of our knowledge of eternal truths our knowledge of arithmetic. He then posited a special illumination from God to explain how a changing fallible intellect like the one possessed by man can attain to such infallible eternal truths. Critics did not fail to notice how such a theory tends to smudge over the distinction between the natural knowledge of the human mind and divinely inspired truth, thereby tending towards epistemological scepticism and also raising problems of the relation between Reason and Revelation. Taking an example from the later modern period, part of Professor Ayer's refutation of Kant's basic theory of synthetic *a priori* propositions consists in showing that, contrary to Kant's belief, arithmetical and geometrical propositions are not synthetic *a priori* but analytic, so that no good reason is left for Kant's transcendental aesthetic.<sup>24</sup> This weakness, then, in the positivist position is at least a philosophically respectable one. Many of the "right people" suffered from it.

As I have just suggested, the Aristotelian theory of intuitive

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Professor Auguste Mansion, *Introduction à la Physique Aristotélicienne* (Louvain, 1946), pp. 166-170.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 82-85.

induction is about the only theory which will explain the above facts, and this theory leaves an opening to metaphysics. It is this theory that St. Thomas follows in his explanation of how we acquire our natural knowledge, both in metaphysics and in other scientific pursuits. He would maintain that, just as through sense-experience we learn mathematics and logic, so through the same means we learn certain general truths which are applicable to all beings. In fact, he maintains that it is ultimately from our considerations of the things presented to us in sense-experience that we arrive at the conclusion that a non-material being exists, namely, God. His argument asserts that a proper consideration of the actual things with which we are acquainted leads us to see that there must be an immaterial being which is the source of existence of everything else. As has been well pointed out,<sup>25</sup> there *is* an experience relevant to the truth or falsity of the proposition "God exists," namely, that of having or of not having *any experience at all*. On St. Thomas' principles, if there were no sense-experience whatever, then it would be impossible to prove the existence of God. And surely, the having or not having at least some experience is just as "experiential" as having one type of experience rather than another. Positivists tend to ask for a *new* type of experience in the physical world<sup>26</sup> which will be relevant to the proposition "God exists." This misses the point. If God exists, it will not be as one among a number of producers of varying types of experience in the physical world. God is the foundation of the mere possibility of *any experience at all*. The positivists demand a relatively superficial type of verification, thinking of God as just one more in the list of existing things. We offer them in return a more fundamental type of verification, since the being we are referring to is the foundation of all the other beings and therefore the source of the possibility of all experience.

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<sup>25</sup> By Fr. Corbishley, S. J., Master of Campion Hall, Oxford. (I hope my memory here is not doing Fr. Corbishley an injustice.)

<sup>26</sup> I do not intend to discuss mystical experience or experience in an after-life, which latter, of course, will in Catholic belief give incontrovertible proof of the existence of God.

I would like to turn now to the positivist rejection of poetry. They say that poetry—and literature in general—is not meaningful to the extent that it employs language in a *non-literal* sense. It is in fact beautiful or striking nonsense. This rejection I consider to be an unfortunate consequence of a false semantical theory. Admittedly positivists can take the not inconsiderable credit for making contemporary philosophers aware of the need to be able to explain their assertions by reference to some definite sense-experience. But it would not be true to say either that they were the first philosophers in history to investigate semantical problems, or that their whole theory is acceptable. As regards the historical point—which Ayer in fact admits—it is, for example, difficult to read either Aristotle's *Metaphysics* or his *Physics* without coming across exhaustive analyses of the meanings of various key words in his thought. And St. Thomas' treatise on the Trinity is about as intricate a piece of semantical analysis as anyone could wish for.<sup>27</sup> As regards semantical analysis in pure metaphysics, if Aristotle's theory of analogy, taken over and developed by St. Thomas, is not a piece of semantics, it is impossible to say what it is. In the words of Fr. Copleston:

I suggest that much of what is now called "linguistic analysis" does not differ fundamentally from what Aquinas would have thought of as metaphysical analysis. The descriptive names may differ; but what is done seems to be often much the same sort of thing. The results of the analyses of Aquinas and of a modern analyst may often be different. But that is another matter.<sup>28</sup>

As regards the truth of their theory, I would say that Ayer, at any rate, puts forward an untenable thesis on poetry, one, moreover, which has unfortunate consequences when applied to his own philosophical position. He tells us that: "It is, in fact, very rare for a literary artist to produce sentences which have no literal meaning. And when this does occur, the sentences are carefully chosen for their rhythm and balance. If the author writes nonsense, it is because he considers it most

<sup>27</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, qq. 27-43.

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 37, n. 1.



suitable for bringing about the effects for which his writing is designed.”<sup>29</sup> It is to be noted here that Professor Ayer implicitly equates meaning with *literal* meaning. Anything which goes into the realm of metaphor falls into the class of nonsense. I suggest that to equate meaningfulness with literal meaningfulness is to give a false theory of meaning; and furthermore, that as soon as meaning is allowed to figurative expressions, then poetry comes into the class of meaningful and informative expressions. I propose to illustrate my point by discussing the meaning of two vital words in the positivist vocabulary, namely, “analytic” and “synthetic.”

What does the word “analytic” come from? It comes, so the Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek-English Lexicon informs us, from the Greek verb *ἀναλύω* meaning “to unloose, undo again . . . to set free.” The second meaning of this verb is “to do away, get rid of; to stop, put an end to.” *ἀνάλυσις*, the same source informs us, means “a loosing, releasing: dissolution, death.” It is evident that the literal meaning of the word “analysis” is “a freeing, or a releasing,” for if anything is the literal meaning of a word it is that meaning which the word was originally given. Something, then, is *analytic* when it accomplishes this action. Now I would like to see how the positivists can show that they are using “analytic” in the above sense. The fact is they cannot do so. The term refers to a physical loosening, whereas whatever “loosening” a logician does with his analytic propositions, we can be sure that it is not of the physical variety. The simple fact is that philosophers have extended the meaning of the word “analysis” to cover a form of loosening which is not at all physical in nature. Compared with the original loosening meant by the term, philosophers’ and logicians’ *loosening* is of a highly metaphorical form. In which case—applying Professor Ayer’s rules of meaning—the positivists, in talking about *analytic* propositions, are talking nonsense.

They will object, no doubt, that they have defined the term

<sup>29</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 45; cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

"analytic" in a given way; and it therefore has the literal meaning that they have decided to give it. But unfortunately for their argument, the term was not chosen entirely at random. It appears already in the works of Kant, and can be traced back—at least to the logical writings of Aristotle—and always with the same general meaning of "freeing" the elements of something from the whole.

Philosophers, of course, are not unique in this respect. We can find examples of terms used in the natural sciences with technical meanings different from yet still bearing some similarity to, their original ones. Take, for example, "root" in mathematics, "moment" in physics, or "current" (of electricity) in the same science. And it needs no great knowledge of the history of philosophy to realize that "analytic" is merely one of a whole host of philosophical terms taken out of ordinary language and given a slightly different meaning. One need merely mention words like "logic" (from λέγω meaning "to lay in order"), "idea" (from ἰδέα meaning "the look, or appearance of a thing"), or Plato's δίκη which originally may have meant "a path or track."<sup>30</sup> It is surely not surprising, when people look for words in which to express new knowledge, that they should tend to make use of the words they already have, choosing those whose meanings already bear some resemblance to the new ideas. One could say with truth that these words like "idea," "analytic" and the rest, already contained their new meanings potentially; they were already *inherently capable* of expressing those new meanings.

We can illustrate what we mean by this last sentence if we take for example the old-fashioned metaphor of the *smiling* meadow. Though the word "smiling" was no doubt used to mean only a certain kind of expression on a human face, what in effect gives the empirical justification for talking about a *smiling* meadow is the fact that some meadows in early summer do express to an observer a certain state of well-being similar

<sup>30</sup> Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie's *The Greek Philosophers* (Methuen, 1950), pp. 5-11; cf. also Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, *passim*.

to that expressed by a certain kind of smile on a human face. Now although this similarity between what a given meadow expresses and what a human face expresses was probably not noticed when the word "smiling" was first used, it was nevertheless there in reality; and so the reason for extending the meaning of the word "smiling" to the meadow was already there and waiting to be recognised.

Now if we deny that the technical words of philosophy were already in readiness to take on their additional meanings, then the consequences of this denial are sufficiently ridiculous. For since the philosopher is practically forced to take his terms from ordinary language, we will have to conclude that the new meanings he gives to these terms bear no relation at all to their old meanings. In that case, the philosopher's choice of one word rather than of another will be purely arbitrary; and his reason for making any use at all of ordinary language as opposed to making up his own language jabberwocky-style will boil down merely to a question of imagination and effort. Very few people would find themselves competent to explain how such a conclusion squares with the facts either of the history of philosophy or of the every-day psychology of learning. And very few philosophers would find such a language of any value to themselves or to anyone else.

No one will deny that philosophers aim at clarifying the total meaning of each term that they use, as far, at least, as they can do so. This follows from the expressed aim of philosophy, which is to provide an understanding of reality in general; and understanding without clarity is of a low order. And here, since poets presumably do not aim at this sort of technical clarity, lies the difference between poets and philosophers. But when it comes to the initial widening of a word's meaning in order to give expression to new experience, then philosophers and poets are on all-four together—and along with them, the rest of humanity.

There is, nevertheless, another position that the positivists might wish to take up. They might wish to object that the meaning of "analysis" remains the same as it always was, but

that its application is widened. To this the short reply is that such a defense is equally available to the poet when he uses his metaphors. Furthermore such a method of arguing has its own difficulties. For since one sort of analysis is physical and the other is logical, we can always ask, To which kind of these two does the term "analysis" apply? If they say: "To neither; it is neutral," they will be getting close to saying that the word has no meaning at all. What in fact becomes of the theory, very popular to positivists, that the meaning of a word is the way in which you use it? How can you *use* a positive term like "analytic" without applying it to something? If you apply it to nothing then you are not using it. Consequently, on the above theory of meaning, the word has no meaning. If, on the other hand, they say that it applies to both the physical and the logical forms of loosening, then why cannot the poet say the same for his *smiling* morn? And in any case doesn't the meaning of the word "analysis" get stretched through such an application?

Consequently, if the use by poets of metaphor, simile, and other figurative expressions, results in nonsense, then positivism is complete and utter nonsense; and so is the whole of philosophy. For you will hardly find a key word in any philosophical system which is not taken from ordinary language and given a meaning wider than its original one. Now poets do this very often; so do prose writers, as the phrase "purple patch" indicates when used of their more ambitious efforts. And of course, the positivists, when they are *en famille*, make playful use of metaphorical expressions with the intention of conveying information to one another. When they talk about a *portmanteau* word, or about *unpacking* the meaning of a word, they would feel unhappy if you told them they were talking nonsense; but they would be pleased if you said that you understood "what they were getting at."

It is a simple empirical fact that can be established by listening to almost any band of philosophers, positivists above all, that the metaphorical use of terms can be a highly informative manner of talking, successful sometimes in communicating ideas



when no other way will do so. And this, I suggest, is also what the poet does. He is gifted with a rare insight into reality and sometimes expresses that insight by means of metaphors. Of course, there may be the case of a person who is unable to express in words the experience he has had. This can be due to one of two things; either he himself does not possess the poetic faculty, or else words themselves are unable to express the experience he has had. And I see no reason why the latter should not sometimes be the case,—but that is another question. When the poet does give expression to his insights by using metaphorical terms, he is doing something of the same sort as the positivist does when the latter uses the term “synthetic.”<sup>31</sup> Both see the wider usage of the respective terms they use, but one group, the philosophers, decide that the wider meaning that they see in the term will, for their technical purposes, become its literal meaning. The poets do not in fact take this last step.

To conclude this discussion on positivism and poetry, it would seem that the limiting of meaning to *literal* meaning is an unnecessarily rigorous procedure even on positivist principles, for the positivist could apparently still achieve his main aim of eliminating metaphysics while yet allowing meaningfulness to poetry. He need only have rejected such poetry as referred to modes of being that transcend the world of sense-experience. This rejection would not be on the grounds that the terms are not *literally* meaningful, but that they are not in any sense about the things to which they intend to refer, there being no such things. They would in fact be meaningless for the same reasons that metaphysical terms are claimed to be meaningless.

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We might profitably finish this whole discussion with a remark on “going beyond the world of sense-experience.”

<sup>31</sup> Liddell and Scott tell us that *συνθετικός* means “skilled in putting together,” and that it comes from *συντίθηναι* meaning “to place or put together.” And the positivists would have a hard time showing that the putting together which they accomplish in their empirical propositions is of the same form as the putting together meant by the first use of this term.

Surely we are doing this at nearly every moment of our conscious experience. What in fact does the reader see when he reads these pages? He merely sees black marks on a white background. Yet he goes beyond these immediate sense-phenomena to the ideas that I am trying to convey to him. Conversation is just one more case of this process we engage in every day of "transcending the phenomena." We hear noises, and make noises which, scientists will tell us, are soundwaves of varying frequencies. Yet we go beyond these noises to the ideas and intentions of thinking beings, and the world in general approves of us for doing so. And the positivists disseminate their ideas by this means. Now I fail to see how what is considered to be an unmistakable sign of intelligence in a young child, and a *sine qua non* for a tolerable adult life, should suddenly become a sign of ineptitude in a philosopher. The young child who strays beyond the immediate visual and the auditory sensations which he gets when someone is talking to him, is applauded. People say: "How clever he is, understanding us at his age!" which is applause for his going beyond the immediate noises, movements, and colors which he experiences. And the child who interprets the whole of his sense-experience in terms of the empiricist "contiguity and succession" of sense-phenomena, or, in other words, who fails to go beyond them by saying to himself in some way: "Someone is talking to me," generally ends up in one of the categories of the mentally deficient. To my knowledge a child who refuses or fails to see any causal connection between the various sense-impressions which cross his line of vision has never been singled out by his elders, be they positivist or metaphysician, as an outstanding example of the proper use of one's intellectual powers. In the same way I see no exceptional maturity of mind in the counsel that we should not stray beyond immediate sense-experience in seeking an explanation of the whole world of sense-experience. If all that we get from experience is "contiguity and succession," then all those signs of awakening intelligence in children are really the beginnings of a most pernicious method of thinking, namely, of seeing what isn't

there, of jumping to conclusions when the evidence does not warrant it; and any person who succeeds in reading a line of what is written on this page—or any other page for that matter—is merely showing how enslaved he has become to this pernicious habit. The whole of this ultra-empiricist way of thinking reminds me of the solipsist who wrote to the *London Times* wondering why, considering how eminently reasonable was the philosophy of solipsism, more people didn't adopt it. I suggest in fact that that same ability which enables us to transcend the phenomena connected with reading and conversation, also leads us to go beyond the phenomena of everyday experience to affirm the existence of a non-material supreme being as the only possible explanation of why there should be any phenomena at all. If the latter activity is in principle nonsensical, then so is the former.

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## A PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF HERACLITUS OF EPHESUS

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### I

IT may be well to remember at this point that many of the early Greek fragments—poetic, “*orphic*,” hieratic or “*philosophical*”—are cast in a language difficult and perhaps impossible for us to understand. The vocabulary of these fragments, to be sure, seems to be our own; the diction sounds somewhat familiar; but the mold, the literary formulas in which they are cast are definitely alien to the ideological mold in which modern secular thought is advanced. Thus, apparently familiar words become symbols of unfamiliar ideas with the result that we are little qualified to grasp the traditional, as distinguished from the lexographical, meaning or value of word and phrase—to interpret properly the traditional figurative diction, or to know when the author does, or does not, intend us to place a literal interpretation on his words.

The task of properly interpreting the figurative diction of the earliest transmitted Greek “sayings” is further complicated by the fact that many of these “sayings” belong to, or at least are carry-overs from, the twilight zone of myth and history. In addition, it must be borne in mind that “the wise men” of early Greek lore include seers, poets, sages and “philosophers.” It is even permissible to maintain that “the wise man” of old was a seer (prophet), poet and sage (“philosopher”) all in one. Suffice it to recall that the “philosopher” Democritus was called by his disciples a prophet, the Voice of Zeus; that he allegedly prayed that he might meet with favorable specters of the gods; that he invoked his Sicilian Muse (poetic) to speed his chariot from the Abode of Holiness; and that tradition has depicted him as a contemplative ascetic, subject to fits of “madness.” But “madness” is traditionally the divine



inspiration of poets and, hence, links Democritus to the poet. For does not Plato insist: "He who knocks at the gates of poetry untouched by the madness of the Muses . . . will be denied access to the mysteries, and his sober compositions will be eclipsed by the creation of inspired madness."<sup>1</sup> And Democritus himself is said to have stated: "Truly noble poetry is written with the breath of divine inspiration."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, in keeping with the nineteenth (and twentieth) century obsession to pit science (philosophy) against religion, scholars have only too well succeeded in creating a complete though wholly unwarranted cleavage in the originally homogeneous work of Democritus. Hence the first prerequisite for a fuller understanding of Democritus is emphatically to deny that there is or ever was a gulf between his religious beliefs, poetic inspirations, and scientific views. The work of Democritus, it must be remembered, is, and always has been, a single uniform whole in which religion, poetry and philosophy are indissolubly one. Early Greek traditions make abundantly clear the essential association, close affinity and ultimate identity of the visions of the prophet, the inspirations of the poet, and the intuitive insights of the original sage or "philosopher."

Prophetic "madness," we are told, reveals the means by which men may be delivered from evil and be absolved from their sins, a theme which is still reflected in the religious poem of Empedocles, the *Purification*. Thus Epimenides,<sup>3</sup> the Cretan

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus* 245A. Cf. also *Ion* 534B and *ibid.* at 535C, where we are told that poets work by divine possession: "The god deprives them of their sober senses and uses them as instruments, like the singers of oracles and inspired seers [here we have the association of the poet and the seer or prophet, *note by the author*], in order that we who hear them may know that it is not they who speak things of such high worth, but the god himself who speaks to us through them."

<sup>2</sup> Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (6th edit.) 2.146, *frags.* B 17; B 18. Cicero also maintained that there cannot be a good poet without a fiery spirit touched with madness. *De divinatione* 1.80. Cf. also *De oratore* 2.194. Similar ideas can be found in Horace, *Ars poetica* 295.

<sup>3</sup> According to ancient legend the Nymphs not only gave him magic food which dispensed him from eating for the rest of his life, but they also revealed to him, as they had done to Melampus, the secret healing powers of certain plants. He is said to have slept in a cave, an incident that calls to memory the conversations which Rhadamanthys and Minos had with Zeus in the Idaean cave on Crete.

prophet-seer and mystagogue, is above all a purifier and absolver who uses divination not so much in order to reveal the future, but to unveil the forgotten sins of the past of which the present evils are the consequences. The Athenians, in order to expiate and be absolved of the murder of Cylon, on the advice of the Delphic oracle called upon the Cretan purifier who appeased the Erinyes and thereby delivered Athens from the plague. And Orestes, driven mad by the "ancient wrath" which has haunted his ancestors, is purified and absolved by Loxias, the "physician-seer (*ιατρόμαντις*),<sup>4</sup> reader of portents, and purifier of houses."<sup>5</sup> The Hyperborean Abaris prophesied and delivered Sparta from the plague, while Bakis, inspired by the Nymphs, purified and delivered the women of Sparta from madness.

Poetry was the language of prophecy in the wider sense of the term: early oracles, we know, were delivered in verse.<sup>6</sup> It is not without significance that the Muses, who rouse the soul to ecstasy in song and poetry, at Delphi had their shrine next to the old oracular temple of the Earth; they were the "assistants of prophecy." This fact alone should attest the affinity of prophecy and poetry. Prophecy, like inspired poetry, cannot dispense with exalted language, simply because it expresses an exalted subject in an exalted mood. And it is this exaltation which is always identified with the inspiration of the Muses. But while the poet of the logic and, incidentally, the post-heroic age is primarily concerned with his imaginative and inspired visions of the past, it is the prophet's business to pronounce the intentions of the gods and interpret them. Hence his inspirations are concerned, or gradually become concerned, with the future, although this was not always so. In this sense he becomes the prophet-seer in the narrower sense of the term,

<sup>4</sup> Naturally, the physician-seer is here the "physician of the soul" or the healer of the soul who by using his mantic art purifies and, hence, heals the soul. The concept of the "physician of the soul" can also be found in later Greek philosophy. Cf. this writer's "The Meaning of Philosophy in the Hellenistic-Roman World," *The Thomist*, XVII (1954), pp. 197 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 62.

<sup>6</sup> Plutarch, *Defensio oraculorum* XVII, 402C.

that is, the foreteller of things to come. It might also be well to remember that the prophet-seer could foresee the future either intuitively, that is, by inspiration or direct communication with the gods, or by inferring the intentions of the gods through the interpretation of their signs.<sup>7</sup>

The original assumption, then, was that all knowledge which lies beyond the reach of the senses or everyday experience is knowledge especially revealed to certain chosen, that is, inspired persons. These chosen people not only have access to the world beyond, but they are in communion with spirits and gods. They understand and interpret the divine intentions which have been communicated to them by the gods either directly or indirectly. They know the past, the present and the future; and they understand what transpires beneath, above and upon the earth. Hence they are not only prophets (and poets), but also savants or sages. In short, they are "those who know." The theogonies and cosmogonies of the post-heroic age, which use the solemn diction of poetry, for instance, are not based on, or perhaps the result of, immediate observation. They retain, as in the case of Hesiod, the sacred character of divine inspiration; they are primarily mythological revelations and didactic in nature. In this they differ basically from the "literature of entertainment."

According to tradition, the mystical figure of Orpheus, the founder of mysteries, combined all the forms of "divine madness" or, perhaps better, personifies all the attributes of the original prophet (seer), poet and sage combination. Musacus, whose "ancestry" is said to have been Thracian, reputedly was the author of a theogony and of oracles in verse. Probably even more interesting is Salmoxis, the legendary figure in Thrace, who like Rhadamanthys, Minos and Epimenides, retired into a subterranean cave to receive inspired wisdom from the gods. The figures of Orpheus and Salmoxis are of great antiquity, and they seem to have come from the far north. In the case of

<sup>7</sup> This latter form of divination must clearly be distinguished from intuitive or inspired divination.

Salmoxis it is alleged that he taught the Celtic Druids and perhaps the "bards" of the Germanic tribes. In any event, the origin of the Orpheus and Salmoxis legends points in the direction of Siberian Asia. Also of great importance is the fact that Salmoxis was a Thracian, and that the Thracians, who had contacts with both the Celtic and Teutonic peoples, in earliest times probably formed a connecting link between the religious cult systems of the North-Aegean basin and those of North-Central Asia.

The prophet (seer), poet and sage combination, which we encounter during the heroic and post-heroic age of Greek civilization, together with the belief that true wisdom is the sole possession of the divinely inspired person, existed far beyond the horizon of ancient Greece and certainly long before the dawn of the heroic age. It was probably the Thracian peoples who brought this tradition into the Greek orbit where it was accepted, in some instances modified to suit particular instances, and carried into the "philosophical age." It was also in Greece that this tradition came in contact with Near-Eastern influences which also account for certain changes. But everywhere, it seems, the gift of divine inspiration is combined with the gift of poetry and the gift of exceptional wisdom. This exceptional wisdom, which is but inspiration uttered in poetic and, usually obscure (hieratic) language, is "knowledge," whether of the future (as prophecy in the narrower sense of the term), of the past (as "history" or genealogy), or of the hidden present (as "science"). But more than that: the lofty claims of the prophet-poet-sage-combination are accepted without challenge, and he himself is held in high esteem by all peoples, whether as the Celtic Druid, the Greek *μάντις*, the Roman *vates* (later the less spectacular *augur*), the Old-Irish *fili*, the Old-Welsh *awenithion*, the Norse *thulr*, the Siberian *shaman*, or as one of the "Seven Wise Men." These prophet-poet-sages also seem to use a common solemn vocabulary of "technical" terms quite distinct from the ordinary everyday language, as well as a common store of ritualistic formulas. Both this vocabulary and these formulas go back to very



ancient times. They are handed down from generation to generation among the initiated; and their secret and perhaps obscure symbolism is certainly unknown to the uninitiated. And finally, they are used in a ritualistic mold that is alien to the non-initiated and, certainly, wholly unknown to us.

Perhaps the common ancestor or the prototype of the prophet-poet-sage-combination is what has survived into our own time as the *shaman*; and it is not impossible that the inspired wonderworker, the prophetic seer or the didactic poet of the earliest Greek period is nothing other than an offshoot of the original *shaman*. It is, therefore, the *shaman* who claims our special interest—who, if we are at all able to grasp his particular function and role, might help us to understand some aspects of early Greek philosophy and, incidentally, of early Greek didactic poetry.<sup>8</sup>

The *shaman*, who can still be found among the peoples of Northern Asia as well as among the Eskimos and certain North-American Indians, has aptly been described as a poet, diviner, purifier, priest, doctor and savant—as the guardian of religion, the preserver of social institutions and the teller of ancient legends. The whole of the intellectual and much of the artistic life of the community in which he operates is vested in him. Within the community his prestige or status, which is accepted without challenge, is based on the assumption that he is the recipient of divine inspirations, and that he has the power of communicating directly with the gods or spirits. This power manifests itself in what is presumed to be unusual spiritual, intellectual and artistic gifts, especially the gift of poetry. His exceptional knowledge, which is knowledge beyond the senses and everyday experience, includes not only “historical” information or “scientific” explanations, but also an understanding of the past, the hidden present, and the future. In other words, this knowledge embraces not only the whole of human

<sup>8</sup> Cf., in general, Hector Munro Chadwick (and Nora Kershaw Chadwick), *The Growth of Literature*, vols. 3 (Cambridge, 1932-40); Nora Kershaw Chadwick, *Poetry and Prophecy* (Cambridge, 1942); F. M. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae*, edit. W. K. C. Guthrie (Cambridge, 1952) pp. 88 ff.

consciousness and experience, including knowledge of native natural science and a skilled use of poetic diction, but also the mysteries beneath and above the earth. In this the *shaman* is definitely the prototype of the prophet-poet-sage-combination.

The Siberian *shaman* of modern times proclaims: "God has appointed me that I must wander beneath and upon the earth, and has bestowed upon me such power that I can comfort and cheer the afflicted, and on the other hand I can cast down those who are too happy. . . . I am a shaman who knows the future, the past and everything which is taking place in the present, both above and beneath the earth."<sup>9</sup> But is this not exactly what such figures of the Greek heroic or pre-historic age as Salmoxis, Orphaeus, Musaeus, Melampus, Epimenides, Aristeas or Abaris claimed for themselves? And are not the past, present and future also revealed to the seer Calchas<sup>10</sup> and to the didactic poet Hesiod?<sup>11</sup> The formula "above and beneath the earth" to some extent is still preserved, for instance, in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes or the decree of Diopeithes (c. 429 B. C.).

The Siberian *shaman* also undertakes frequent spiritual journeys to the gods or spirits. He rides on a black bird, a goose, or a horse, with one or several companions who assist him in his long and difficult travel. When he reaches his goal, namely, the seat of the god or spirit, he addresses the god or is addressed by the god who reveals to him mysteries, prophecies, some particular instruction, or some bit of wisdom or truth. But is this not reminiscent of the "introduction" to Parmenides' *Way of Truth* which contains a profession that the whole of his didactic (or "philosophical") poem is really a revelation accorded to him by the goddess? As in the heavenly journey of the *shaman* Parmenides travels on a chariot, attended by companions, the "daughters of the Sun." He is on the "way of the deity" which guides the man who knows and leads him far

<sup>9</sup> M. A. Castrén, *Nordische Reisen und Forschungen* vol. IV (St. Petersburg, 1856), p. 256.

<sup>10</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 1.69.

<sup>11</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony* 31 and *ibid.* at 38.

away from the beaten track of men. Beyond the gates of Night and Day Parmenides meets the goddess who is willing to instruct him. The remainder of the poem reports what the goddess revealed to Parmenides. Also, it is no accident that Parmenides wrote in verse. In so doing he merely followed a tradition which saw in poetry the language of revelation. The *shaman*, too, speaks in the solemn form of rhymed diction when he recites the divine message he has received.

According to tradition Abaris, Musaeus, Aristeas, Orphaeus, Epimenides, Salmoxis, Parmenides, Democritus and others were miraculously transported from one place to another: Abaris flew around the world on his magic arrow; Musaeus flew through the air by the favor of Boreas; and Aristeas traveled in spirit far from his body, a feat which is still claimed by the modern *shaman* when he sinks in a trance-like sleep. The great Mongol *shaman* of the time of Jenghiz Khan is said to have ascended to heaven on his horse. The legends of Asia abound with tales of "flying steeds" which took their riders everywhere, including to the "world beyond."

When Empedocles, for instance, claims that at one time or another he had been "a boy and a girl, a bush and a bird, and a dumb fish in the sea," he speaks like the Old-Irish Mongan whose father had foretold him that he, Mongan, would be a wolf, a stag, a salmon in a full pool, a seal and a swan—or like the Welsh bard who, according to his own testimony, was an eagle, a sword, a shield and a string in a harp. The *shaman* has always claimed, and still claims, the power of transforming himself into any form he desires—a power, incidentally, which is part of his supernatural knowledge. Metempsychosis (the faculty of the soul to detach itself from its own body and enter the body of another creature) or metamorphosis is part of both *shamanic* lore and of the tradition of the Greek heroic age, as may be gathered from the legends of Proteus or Thetis.

## II

In his own way Heraclitus of Ephesus, who like the Sibyl "with raving mouth utters things mirthless,"<sup>12</sup> also claims to be a prophet-poet-sage. Diogenes Laertius reports that "he was of a proud and high spirit beyond all other men";<sup>13</sup> and that "in his youth he knew nothing, but when fullgrown he came to know everything."<sup>14</sup> He was no man's pupil, but asserted that he had searched himself and learned everything from himself."<sup>15</sup> The Siberian *shaman*, too, or for that matter, any early representative of the prophet-poet-sage-combination, claims that his knowledge and power come from within himself and not by his own deliberate efforts, but rather from inspiration. The Kirghiz minstrel or *shaman* of modern times still maintains: "I can sing any song whatever; for God has implanted this gift of song in my heart. He gives me the word on my tongue without my having to seek it. I have learned none of my songs. All springs from my inner self."<sup>16</sup> But this is exactly what the inspired Homeric minstrel Phemius meant when he said: "I am self-taught, for a god himself infused into my heart all the modes of song"<sup>17</sup>—or when Demodocus was "impelled by the god" to tell the story of the Trojan horse without ever having heard about the incident.<sup>18</sup>

Diogenes Laertius goes on: "Finally he [*scil.*, Heraclitus, *note by the author*] became a misanthrope, withdrew from the world, and lived in the mountains to feed on grass and plants." Such traits and actions are often found among "holy men," that is, among men who like the prophet-poet-sage of old or the Siberian *shaman* claim to be favored by the gods with

<sup>12</sup> Heraclitus, *frag.* 92 (Diels).

<sup>13</sup> Diogenes Laertius 9.1.—It is presumed that the report of Diogenes Laertius on Heraclitus goes back to Theophrastus by way of a lost doxographical collection of the first century B. C. which H. Diels has called the *Vetusta Placita*.

<sup>14</sup> The "call" of the *shaman*, we are told, often comes in adolescence.

<sup>15</sup> Diogenes Laertius 9.5.

<sup>16</sup> V. V. Radlov, *Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme* (St. Petersburg, 1866-1907), vol. 5, pp. 16 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 22.347.

<sup>18</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 8.492 ff. Cf. also note 1, *supra*.



special gifts which they frequently receive while in solitude and through asceticism. Heraclitus is also said to have been a "melancholic." But according to Aristotle, melancholics are "quick and excitable people . . . who . . . are apt to follow their imagination."<sup>19</sup> This, again, fits the general "mood" of the prophet-poet-sage. The Siberian *shaman* also is described as being given to solitude and as having a strange look in his eyes which betrays excitement and imagination.

Tradition has it that Heraclitus belonged to the Androclid family.<sup>20</sup> The descendants of Androclus, the son of Codrus and legendary founder of Ephesus, were "kings" or hereditary high priests who, among other ceremonial privileges, were also in charge of the secret rites connected with the Eleusian Demeter. These mysteries were of great antiquity, antedating the heroic age of Greece; they point beyond the Aegean horizon. Hence it appears that a certain prophet-poet-sage tradition, which in this case centered around the mysterious Demeter cult, was "hereditary" with Heraclitus.

Heraclitus' utterances are said to have been "obscure," and among later generations he acquired the surname of ὁ σκοτεινός, "the obscure one."<sup>21</sup> The fact that he considered himself a prophet-poet-sage may also be gathered not only from the "obscurity" of his sayings, but also from the oracular style in which they were pronounced. It was said that he did not wish to be understood by the many, but only by the initiated: "He dedicated his book"<sup>22</sup> in the temple of Artemis,<sup>23</sup> and according

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1150 b 25.

<sup>20</sup> Strabo 14.632.

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *De mundo* 396 b 20; Cicero, *De finibus* 2.5.15—The sillographer Timon of Phlius (c. 320-230 B.C.) first summarized the "obscurity" of Heraclitus, which was later repeated invariably by others.

<sup>22</sup> It is extremely doubtful whether Heraclitus ever wrote a book in our sense of the term. His original utterances were oral, and the "fragments" have the appearance of being isolated statements. At a later time they might have been compiled into a "collection." In any event, many of the connecting particles which these fragments contain belong to a later period. The generally attributed title "*On Nature*" is a standard title applied to all writings by or attributed to those "philosophers" to whom the Peripatetics subsequently referred to as *φυσικοί*.

<sup>23</sup> The Ephesian Artemis may be a modified version of the great Mother-Goddess

to some he deliberately made it more obscure in order that only those who were capable [the initiated?, *query by the author*] could have access to it. . . ." <sup>24</sup> Also of interest are two epigrams on Heraclitus, the authenticity of which is extremely doubtful, however: "I am Heraclitus; why do you uncultured people drag me to and fro (*ἀνὼ κάτω*—bother me)? Not for you did I toil,<sup>25</sup> but for those who know me. . . ." <sup>26</sup> The other epigram, which definitely reflects the imagery of certain mysteries in which the novice was led from darkness into the brilliantly lit scene of revelation, reads as follows: "Do not be in a hurry to unwind to the center-stick the roll of Heraclitus, the Ephesian; the path is hard indeed to traverse.<sup>27</sup> There is gloom and unrelieved darkness. But if an initiate lead you, it shines more brightly than the shining sun."<sup>28</sup> Not unimportant is also the remark recorded by Diogenes Laertius, that the title of his book was "Muses."<sup>29</sup> For the prophet-poet-sage of Greek antiquity is traditionally associated with the Muses. Hence Heraclitus might have dedicated his work to these powers which inspired him and to which he owed all of his knowledge. But the same could be said about the story that he dedicated his book to Artemis.

Although Heraclitus, by dedicating his work to the Muses or to Artemis apparently credits the Muses (or Artemis) with having inspired him or with having given him certain revelations—in this he seems to follow the old tradition which insists that the Muses or some god communicate real truth—he could nevertheless maintain that his knowledge and wisdom came from within himself. For his is inspired rather than acquired

of Asia and, hence, is a deity of very great antiquity. She is the huntress (this would point to a pre-agricultural culture) and the goddess of wild nature. Originally she was associated with the tree-worship before the introduction of agriculture, and with the fertility of men and animals, but not of crops.

<sup>24</sup> Diogenes Laertius 9.6.

<sup>25</sup> This "toil" may be akin to the toil of Parmenides who undertook a perilous journey beyond the gates of Night and Day in order to visit the goddess who revealed to him the truth.

<sup>26</sup> Diogenes Laertius 9.7.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. note 25, *supra*.

<sup>28</sup> Diogenes Laertius 9.7.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. also Plato, *Sophist* 242D.

knowledge or wisdom. This would also explain the pronounced "dogmatism" which he manifests to a very large degree: only inspired persons, that is, people who speak with the authority of direct divine inspiration or revelation, and who believe that the deity speaks through them can be convincingly dogmatic.

Judging from the content of the preserved fragments ascribed to Heraclitus it also becomes apparent that he considered himself to be primarily an inspired hierophant: "Of the Logos, which is as I describe it [or, which stands forever], [ordinary] men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when they have heard it. For although all things happen according to this Logos, men are like people of no experience, even when they experience such words and deeds as I explain. . . ." <sup>30</sup> In another place he extolls his audience: "Listen not to me but to the Logos . . .," <sup>31</sup> implying thereby that it is the Logos which speaks through him, in other words, that he is prophetically inspired by the Logos. And Logos certainly means here something more than "word" or "discourse": it signifies something like "eternal truth" or, to be more exact, revealed eternal truth which does not come from man but from God. It might be interesting to note here that the Eleusian hierophant—and, as we have seen, Heraclitus, belonged to a family which were hereditary hierophants or high priests of the Eleusian mysteries—also admonished his audience that they must understand the language and not merely hear it; they must be initiated into the mysteries, for otherwise they remain uncomprehending even after they have heard the words. Like the Eleusian hierophant, the Ephesian hierophant insists that ordinary men cannot understand the real although hidden meaning of his revelation, for they cannot possibly grasp the message veiled in ritualistic language and mystic symbols. But according to Heraclitus, the Logos, which is often identified with nature or God, speaks in a clear and unmistakable language: only the non-initiated, although they have eyes to see and ears to hear, fail to understand the lan-

<sup>30</sup> *Frag. 1* (Diels).

<sup>31</sup> *Frag. 50* (Diels).

guage. This recalls Pindar's statement: "I have many arrows in my quiver; they have a voice that speaks to men who can understand, but for the many they need interpreters. Wise is he who knows much by his own genius. . . ." <sup>32</sup>

Heraclitus, then, claims for himself a prophetic knowledge; he claims to be a prophet endowed with unique insights—unique, because these insights have been revealed to him and to him alone. The revealed Logos is to be discovered within as well as without man, although this discovery goes far beyond the ordinary senses or perhaps everyday experience. The Logos is common to all men, if men only had the gift to understand and apprehend it. Perhaps Heraclitus' notion of the Logos contains the idea that the human intellect, properly employed and sufficiently instructed, partakes in the divine intellect or Logos and, hence, is capable of understanding not only nature as it is governed by the Logos, but also the Logos and, through the Logos, itself. Thus Heraclitus seems to establish the affinity of the human mind to the divine mind, and it is perhaps this affinity, this "revelation," which justifies his claim to prophetic wisdom and inspired knowledge—to the fact that he is above all an inspired visionary prophet-poet-sage rather than a pro-saic "philosopher" or *πολυμαθής*. But unlike the older poets whom he deprecates, he is not merely inspired by the Muses or perhaps by Apollo, but by the Logos itself.

The prophet-poet-sage Heraclitus, too, understands the unity of all existence as well as the unity of all life. Prophetic-poetic vision enables him to see the ultimate kinship of all existence and all life; and by losing the sense of separate existence in the Logos as well as in a common experience of the whole of nature, he knows how to free himself from the limitations of time and space.<sup>33</sup> This is exactly what the Welsh bard experiences when

<sup>32</sup> Pindar, *Ol.* 2.83.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *frag.* 51 (Diels): ". . . they [the uninitiated, *note by the author*] do not comprehend how being at variance it [the Logos, *note by the author*] agrees with itself."—The connection between the many and the single underlying unity, which is elsewhere described as Logos, is maintained by the maintenance of a tension between opposites which exists as a result of their inevitable change, sooner or later, from one extreme to another.



he claims that at one time or another he was an eagle, a sword, a shield, and a string in a harp—when Mongan is foretold that he will be a wolf, a stag, a salmon, a seal, and a swan; or when Empedocles maintains that he was “a boy and a girl, a bush and a bird, and a dumb fish in the sea.” And this is what Heraclitus wishes to convey when he announces that “the sea is the most pure and the most polluted water”;<sup>34</sup> “that neither darkness nor light, neither good nor bad, are different, but are one and the same thing”;<sup>35</sup> that “good and evil are one”;<sup>36</sup> that “the way up and down is one and the same”;<sup>37</sup> that “for the bow the name is life, but the work is death”;<sup>38</sup> that “as the same thing there exists in us living and dead and the waking and the sleeping and young and old; for those things having changed round are those, and those things having changed round [again] are these ones”;<sup>39</sup> that “cold things warm themselves, warm cools, moist dries, parched is made wet”;<sup>40</sup> that “night and day . . . are one”;<sup>41</sup> that “things taken together are whole and not whole, something which is brought together and brought apart, which is in tune and not in tune . . .”;<sup>42</sup> that “to God all things are beautiful and good and just . . .”;<sup>43</sup> that “God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and hunger . . .”;<sup>44</sup> and that “[the mortal nature] scatters and . . . gathers . . . comes together and flows away . . . approaches and departs. . . .”<sup>45</sup>

The Siberian *shaman*, as we have seen, proclaims: “God has appointed me . . . and has bestowed upon me . . . power. . . . I am the shaman who knows. . . .” But this statement does not substantially differ from what Heraclitus proclaims about him-

<sup>34</sup> *Frag.* 61 (Diels).

<sup>35</sup> *Frag.* 67 (Diels).

<sup>36</sup> *Frag.* 58 (Diels).

<sup>37</sup> *Frag.* 59 (Diels).

<sup>38</sup> *Frag.* 103 (Diels).

<sup>39</sup> *Frag.* 60 (Diels).

<sup>40</sup> *Frag.* 48 (Diels).

<sup>41</sup> *Frag.* 88 (Diels).

<sup>42</sup> *Frag.* 126 (Diels).

<sup>43</sup> *Frag.* 57 (Diels).

<sup>44</sup> *Frag.* 10 (Diels).

<sup>45</sup> *Frag.* 102 (Diels).

<sup>46</sup> *Frag.* 67 (Diels).—Judging from this fragment, God is inherent in the world. He underlies all things including all changes, and He provides the essential unity of all things, a unity which elsewhere is called Logos. Cf. also note 33, *supra*.

<sup>47</sup> *Frag.* 91 (Diels).

self: "... the Logos which is as I describe it . . . and declare how it is . . ."<sup>48</sup> [but] listen not to me but to the Logos<sup>49</sup> . . . [which] is the wise thing [to do]. . ."<sup>50</sup> Both Heraclitus and the *shaman* speak in the first person; they speak with that inspired authority which only the first person can adequately express. Heraclitus insinuates here that the Logos has especially "appointed" him by revealing itself to him, and has empowered him to announce the Logos. But actually, it is not he who speaks here, but the Logos which speaks through him. Hence he insists: "Listen not to me but to the Logos. . ."<sup>51</sup> And as the appointed prophet of the Logos he is also one who knows without fail. Now we can also understand why, like a prophet, he speaks disdainfully of the "uncomprehending," of those who refuse to believe or understand "even when they experience such words and deeds as I explain."<sup>52</sup> And "although the Logos," of which he is the inspired prophet, "is common to all men [as it is common to all things, *note by the author*], the many live as if they had a private understanding"<sup>53</sup>—as if they had some private revelation of their own.

Obviously, such "proud" words can be uttered only by a man who is convinced that he is inspired and, hence, has a divine mission; that he does not actually speak for himself but for the deity which speaks through him. In short, these are "revelations" of a hierophant, of an inspired prophet-poet-sage rather than the sober statements of a philosopher in the traditional sense of the term.<sup>54</sup> Hence the first prerequisite for a better and more accurate understanding of the "obscure" Hera-

<sup>48</sup> *Frag.* 1 (Diels).

<sup>50</sup> *Frag.* 50 (Diels).

<sup>49</sup> *Frag.* 114 (Diels).

<sup>51</sup> *Frag.* 50 (Diels).

<sup>52</sup> *Frag.* 1 (Diels).—Cf. also *frag.* 34 (Diels) where Heraclitus says about the many that they are deaf to the message of the Logos; they are like people "who although they are present are absent." See also *Psalm* 115:6: "They have ears, but they hear not. . . ." *Mark* 8:18 ". . . having ears, hear you not?"

<sup>53</sup> *Frag.* 2 (Diels).—What Heraclitus wishes to convey here seems to be this: The Logos is what it is, even if men refuse to recognize it as such; it is the constituting principles of all, even though all reject it.

<sup>54</sup> It is interesting to note here that Parmenides, to mention just another instance, in his *Way of Truth* also speaks with the same "haughtiness." For he, too, is the messenger of the deity which proclaims its truth through him.

clitus is the realization that he speaks as a prophet-poet-sage who does not, and cannot, accept the modern gulf between religion, poetry and philosophy. Heraclitus' true spiritual ancestors are not perchance the "Milesian physicists" or perhaps the relatively late Homer, Hesiod or Pindar—the "poets of entertainment" or the "philosophers of nature" elicit from him only words of contempt—but are Orphaeus, Musaeus, Melampus, Abaris and Salmoxis, the pre-heroic representatives of the original (or *shamanic*) prophet-(seer)-poet-sage combination.

### III

With the possible exception of some very doubtful references in Parmenides and Epicharmus, Heraclitus, to be sure, was not understood by his ancient critics or reporters. Plato probably contains the earliest doxographical evidence about Heraclitus.<sup>55</sup> But Plato's knowledge of Heraclitus, which he might have derived from Cratylus, was at best extremely scanty. As a matter of method, Plato recites earlier views and opinions, including those of Heraclitus, only whenever he believes that they may be relevant to his own position. In addition, his references are often, and perhaps too often, plainly distorted for humorous purposes.

Aristotle, on the other hand, manifests what seems to be a more detailed knowledge of Heraclitus than Plato. His references to the Ephesian, on the whole, are, however, incidental and meant primarily to illustrate or set off some view of his own. As a necessary result, these references are frequently distorted into outright errors.<sup>56</sup> It may be contended, however, that Aristotle probably originated fewer misconceptions about Heraclitus' teachings than Plato did, although he too, in order to reconcile Heraclitus' views to his own theories, seriously falsified some of Heraclitus' views. Also, Aristotle's general

<sup>55</sup> The Hippocratic *De victu*, which in the first chapter possibly contains some references to Heraclitus, is probably post-Platonic.

<sup>56</sup> For instance, Aristotle accepts without reservation the ridiculous Platonic interpretation of Heraclitus πάντα ῥεῖ doctrine.

deficiencies as well as his unreliability as a historian of philosophy should be taken into account here. Hence his references and reports, in the main, are of very little value: they are often misleading rather than illuminating. These deficiencies to a very large extent were responsible for the unreliability of the subsequent doxographical tradition concerning the teachings of Heraclitus.

The primary source for the whole doxographical tradition, including that of Heraclitus, in all likelihood is the *Φυσικῶν δόξαι* of Theophrastus.<sup>57</sup> Theophrastus, in turn, was strongly under the influence of Aristotle and many of Aristotle's misapprehensions. This influence is illustrated by Theophrastus' views on Heraclitus. Aside from the Aristotelian influence, many of Theophrastus' views and judgments about the Ephesian in the main are plain conjectures rather than objective reports—conjectures, it seems, which were made primarily in default of reliable evidence. In any event, Theophrastus, although he might have had access to more materials than Aristotle, to a large extent depended on Aristotle; and Theophrastus' successors,<sup>58</sup> in turn, relied on Theophrastus. Thus the whole doxographical tradition regarding Heraclitus is not necessarily concerned with Heraclitus himself, but rather with what Theophrastus (and Aristotle) thought about Heraclitus. In short, like so many doxographical works, this particular tradition deals with what may be called the typical doxographical attitude—critical or otherwise—towards Heraclitus rather than with Heraclitus himself.

In conclusion it may be stated that both Plato and Aristotle refer to Heraclitus primarily in the light of their own philosophical reflections. The majority of these references are of a general or generalized nature which as often as not are sheer

<sup>57</sup> Cf. H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin, 1879):

<sup>58</sup> H. Diels, *op. cit.*, *supra* at 57, has shown that the original *Φυσικῶν δόξαι* of Theophrastus was transmitted, in a greatly condensed form and with some Stoic additions, through a lost compilation of about the first century B. C. (the *Vetusta Placita* of Diels), to the surviving doxographical works, such as the *Placita* of Aetius and the "*Doxography*" of Diogenes Laertius.



Platonism<sup>59</sup> or plain Aristotelianism.<sup>60</sup> They are introduced by both Plato and Aristotle more or less incidentally, presumably to illustrate by contrast some points of their own. The result of this "method" is that Heraclitus' views are often grossly distorted in order to serve a "didactic" or illustrative purpose. In the course of this process the hierophant Heraclitus was gradually turned into a "philosopher" in the Platonic-Aristotelian sense of the term—something he most decidedly was not and never intended to be. It might even be permissible to point out that Plato and Aristotle, through their distortions and misconceptions of the true nature of the Ephesian—distortions which are primarily self-revelatory statements about themselves rather than objective historical reports—in a way created and perpetuated the "philosophy" of Heraclitus according to their own standards and "in their own image." The doxographical tradition, which subsequently was permeated by Stoic ideas, especially by the Stoic subdivisions of philosophy, continued this process with the result that Heraclitus, the prophet-poet-sage who still spoke with the voice of the old hierophant, ultimately found his permanent though undeserved resting place among the early Greek "philosophers" or, to be more exact, among the early "physicists."

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<sup>59</sup> Cf., for instance, Plato, *Symposium* 187A.

<sup>60</sup> Cf., for instance, *De coelo* 298 b 25; *ibid.* at 279 b 12; *Eudemian Ethics* 1235 a 25; *Topics* 159 b 30; *Metaphysics* 1005 b 23; *ibid.* at 1062 a 31; *ibid.* at 1012 a 33; *ibid.* at 1005 b 35; *ibid.* at 1063 b 24; *ibid.* at 1012 a 24; *ibid.* at 1012 b 26.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism.* By LOUIS BOUYER. Trans. by A. V. LITTLEDALE. Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1956. Pp. 234. \$3.75.

This is an original and valuable book. We can commend its purpose and its broad outlines. Unfortunately, we cannot subscribe to some of its detailed statements and propositions. The book is original because the author directs attention to a basic conflict within Protestantism that does much to elucidate the trends and developments of Protestant history. Events and movements that puzzle the outside observer, that appear to him to be disparate and unrelated, take on meaning and fall into place in a broad picture when interpreted by Fr. Bouyer's formula. In spite of the defects that we shall have to point out (and there may be others we have overlooked), Fr. Bouyer's study is provocative and stimulating and should be a starting point for further original research into the Protestant problem.

Like all human things the book labors under the limitations that plague the human mind. Its problem is complex and must be treated step by step. The two segments of the Protestant problem must be discussed successively in the two parts of the volume. For this reason the Catholic reader, before he reaches the second part, might begin to tell himself that the author has been too benign in his interpretation of the religious feeling of Luther, Calvin, Barth, and other Protestant leaders. In the second half the Protestant reader, who will probably be delighted with the first half of the book, will begin to experience a mounting disappointment as the author uncovers one after the other the inherent and mortal weaknesses of Protestantism. But the book must be read in its entirety and it must be read slowly and attentively. Justice to the author demands that his thesis be judged only after a complete study of what he holds. This is a book that cannot be sampled by browsing without risk of misunderstanding what the author is trying to do. But no serious reader, as Fr. G. de Broglie, S. J., writes in an introductory letter to the author, "provided he takes the trouble to read the entire work with attention, could entertain any doubt that it has been inspired throughout by a constant care for sympathetic understanding and frank objectivity. Nearly all will ultimately be grateful to you for having obliged them to reflect on a problem one or more of whose aspects had doubtless escaped their attention, and so for bringing a better understanding between Catholics and Protestants."

Father Bouyer's book is an example of the best type of Catholic-Pro-

testant discussion. It analyzes the depths of both Catholicism and Protestantism. It shows where they are in agreement, where they diverge, why they disagree, why in the final analysis they should be one. No heat is engendered. There are no polemics. Rather there is understanding, sympathy and love. Step by step the volume illuminates Protestantism for Catholics, Catholicism for Protestants, enables Catholics to understand what is good and positive in Protestantism, shows Protestants that their own positive and negative principles are in perpetual conflict that can never be resolved, that the negative principles are a denial rather than an authentic expression of the true aspirations of Protestantism, that Catholicism in no way involves a denial of anything that is genuine and positive in Protestantism.

Fr. Bouyer has a background that explains his ability to make his analysis. He was raised a Protestant, became a Lutheran clergyman, spent a number of years in the ministry. A desire to explore Protestantism to its depths led him inexorably to discover the incompatibility that exists between the two types of Protestantism—Protestantism as a genuine spiritual movement deriving from the Gospel and Protestantism in the formulas and systems that make it an institution hostile to Catholicism. This study did not lead him to reject the profound religious values in which he had been nurtured but only what is negative in Protestantism. He ended by giving adhesion to the Catholic Church as the only Church in which the full flowering of the positive elements found in Protestantism could be possible. He is now a priest of the French Oratory and professor of spiritual theology at the *Institut Catholique* in Paris.

Fr. Bouyer maintains that there is a fundamental agreement between Catholicism and the authentic Christian aspirations of the Protestant movement, that in Protestantism as an institution there is a deep conflict between positive Christian values retained by Protestantism and negative elements originating in sixteenth-century polemics and opposition to the Catholic Church. He finds that the negative elements constantly corrode and corrupt the positive values and prevent them from reaching mature development. Always the negative elements win the victory and stifle the positive values. This conflict is inherent and will not be resolved until Protestantism surrenders its negative elements, which disfigure it, and returns to Catholicism. Only in the Catholic Church can the positive values of Protestantism find their full flowering and development.

The author builds up this thesis by exploring Protestantism in its depths and in its full scope. The book falls into two parts. In the first part, almost half the book, the author examines and discusses what he calls the positive principles of Protestantism—belief in the absolutely gratuitous nature of grace, the absolute supremacy of God and the Divine Majesty, the sovereign authority of Scripture, the necessity of an individual response



to God, to Christ, to grace, in which the human being enters into a living, sublime relationship with God, His Creator, and with Christ, His Redeemer. The author holds that these positive affirmations, rightly understood, are the genuine core of the Protestant movement. These chapters portray what is positive in Protestantism. The reader realizes the values of these sublime concepts and grasps that they are the hidden springs that have kept Protestantism alive. In concluding each section of the discussion, the author takes up the Catholic position on each point and maintains that Catholics have no quarrel with these positive principles, rightly understood; that they share them, that they derive them from the same pure source of the Gospel.

In the second part of the volume, the author deals with the negative elements of Protestantism, chiefly: 1) Luther's doctrine of extrinsic justification; 2) as a consequence of extrinsic justification, the denial of any objective, intrinsic value to good works, to the sacraments, to the liturgy; 3) equation of the supremacy of the Scriptures—God speaking by his Word—with denial of Tradition, the Teaching Church, pope, councils and hierarchy; 4) the crushing and annihilation of man as a necessary consequence to the positive assertion of God's absolute sovereignty and majesty; 5) personalized religion and response to God is equated to worship without intermediary except Christ and the Sacred Scriptures.

The underlying source of these negations was the Nominalism of Occam—the philosophy of decadent Scholasticism which corrupted Christian thought. The Reformers used uncritically material drawn from that decaying brand of Scholasticism, becoming its prisoners to a degree they never suspected. Luther was nourished on this system and, despite all his contempt for Scholasticism, was never able to think outside the framework it imposed.

These negations in Protestantism, the author maintains, are by no means bound up essentially with the positive values the Reformation derived from the Scriptures. They do not flow from them, are not implied in them, are not useful nor expedient for them, in fact they are in basic opposition to and corrupt them. They rose by no intrinsic necessity but from the polemical use of the positive elements.

This is the tragedy and dilemma of Protestantism. Its genuine values are caught in a web that continuously involves them and brings on inner conflicts that remain inherent to and will ultimately destroy Protestantism. These conflicts have plagued Protestantism throughout its history. There is a constantly recurring cycle that passes through two main phases. In the first, the negative elements suffocate the positive values. This process began during the very earliest days of Luther's estrangement from the Church. Ultimately the Christian conscience rebels against the corrosive action of the negative elements and the second phase begins. This is the Revival. Individuals endeavor to throw off the implications of the negative

elements and to return to the positive value but do not go far enough; they stop short of rejecting the negative elements. In fact, they cling to them with all the ardor of the original Reformers. Thus the fatal cycle starts once more, since the conflict between positive and negative elements is inherent. Unfortunately, each time that the cycle runs its course the end-product is more harmful, more distant from the true message of the Gospel.

Protestantism ends by embracing the very things it sought to reject. When it emphasized grace and the Divine Majesty to the annihilation of man and his works, the human spirit soon rebelled and began to glorify human efforts. Today, in many respects Protestantism glorifies good works, brotherhood, humanitarianism. When it rejected the divine authority of the Catholic Church, the authority of popes and councils, it left a vacuum that Luther filled by substituting civil authority for the authority of the Church—taking to the bosom of Protestantism the great enemy that medieval Catholicism had resisted unto blood. Calvinism filled the vacuum with rampant individualism, that multiplied churches according to the systems of human contriving, or with subjective authoritarianism that resulted when minister or particular congregation imposed their selected doctrines on their following. Human liberty was more surely stifled than it ever was or can be under Catholic authority. Extreme Biblicism, setting the Bible on a high pillar unhedged by the protecting authority of the Teaching Church and the balance of Sacred Tradition, ran a course that led to complete rejection of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. These and many other examples are treated by the author. Protestantism will continue to pass through these phases. Ultimately it will die from the inner conflict that it has set up and nourishes within its own bosom.

After detailing the mournful history of the Protestant dilemma, the author shows in another chapter that the Catholic Church is necessary to the full flowering of anything positive in Protestantism. To do this he is obliged to discuss many Protestant misconceptions concerning Catholic teaching. He concludes that when Catholic doctrine is rightly understood there is no conflict, rather complete agreement, between it and the positive values of Protestantism. He brings out how these values are better safeguarded and better realized in the Catholic Church, the goal to which modern, scientific, Biblical exegesis points, the only institution in which all that is positive in Christianity is given full play and scope. He calls on Catholics to make a genuine effort to understand the legitimate strivings and aspirations of Protestants, to grasp anew the full nature and deeper significance of their own Church, to realize that they themselves are not absolved from the duty of seeking to apprehend the fulness of Christian faith. In a concluding chapter the author devotes much space to an examination of Barthianism and brings out very well that it, too, (for all that is positive

in it) is nothing other than "a striking accentuation of the fundamental defect of Protestantism." In Barthianism the inner conflict of Protestantism rages in full vigor. Barth's system runs the risk of becoming "the poison, rather than the remedy, of the faith of Protestantism."

Painful necessity now compels us to criticize certain points and statements in this excellent book. We shall first take up those that are less important and terminate with others more serious.

Occasionally the author appears to exaggerate the abuses which existed in the medieval Church. This is done in passing and perhaps it is a quibble to refer to it. For example, he says in one passage that the Reformers "used uncritically material drawn from that decaying Catholicism they desired to elude. . . ." (p. 153) Obviously he is referring to Nominalism and would have done better to say "decaying Scholasticism." Elsewhere he speaks of "an exhausted Christianity." (p. 223) If this refers to Nominalism, which truly was "a decadent medieval system" (p. 228), it is unobjectionable. But we should always be careful in our phraseology to avoid giving the impression that the essential work of Christ could ever fail.

In discussing the ravages of Nominalism Fr. Bouyer seems oblivious of the fact that not all the late medieval theologians were Nominalists. In the Dominican Order there was a flourishing Thomistic school that had recently rejuvenated itself under the guidance of Francisco de Vittoria at Salamanca and was producing theologians of first rank such as Dominic and Peter de Soto, Melchior Cano, and Dominic Bañez. In Italy the Order had produced such Thomistic giants as Thomas de Vio, the celebrated Cardinal Cajetan, and Francis Sylvester of Ferrara. At Cologne during the latter half of the fifteenth century and well into the sixteenth, there was an excellent Thomistic school that enrolled both Dominican and secular masters. There was also a school of "Albertists" at the same University.

While the meagre success of the Catholic defense during the early days of Protestantism can be attributed in part to the fact that Nominalism had caught many of the Catholic apologists (as the author emphasizes, p. 155 seq.) in the same meshes in which it had ensnared Luther, it was also owing to other factors, and to a great extent to the very negative elements that Fr. Bouyer describes—the Protestant hatred and intolerance for everything Catholic—that made calm theological sifting and discussion impossible. Though the author is right when he outlines the ineptness of Erasmus in defending the Catholic position and the harm done by his bungling attempt, this Humanist is hardly an example of a theologian, much less a competent theologian, of the Reformation period.

The basic vitality of Catholic theology during the lifetime of Luther, in spite of the ravages of Nominalism and the decadence of Scholasticism,

is illustrated no better than during the deliberations of the Council of Trent in its three periods. Several hundred bishop and priest theologians (the Dominican Order alone sent well over a hundred) met to reexamine the whole body of Catholic truth. They had all been trained during the years when decadent Scholasticism is said to have been rampart. They were secular and regular theologians from the various universities, religious from the different Orders. A large number were men of high caliber and first rank. They manifested a profound theological knowledge and culture, displayed a wide knowledge of the positive sources of theology and a sane theological judgment capable of distinguishing the certain from the uncertain, what was to be held of obligation from what was open to difference of opinion. They were well-acquainted likewise with the opinions of the Reformers. All of this can be verified by consultation of the decrees, the acts, the diaries, the letters, the tracts that emanated from the Council of Trent.

This scholarly excellence and theological preparation are inexplicable if we suppose that Catholic theology at the end of the fifteenth and during the early-sixteenth century was in a state of complete decay and collapse. In every country, immediately that Protestantism arose, there were outstanding theologians who wrote and spoke in defense of the Catholic cause. The names of St. John Fisher in England, James Latomus of Louvain, John Eck in Germany, Cardinal Cajetan in Italy (to mention only the best known) come immediately to mind. The Dominican Order alone, in Germany, in spite of the progressive ravages of the Reformation which destroyed its houses and scattered its men, produced over thirty polemicists against Lutheranism. In other words, if we except Nominalism, the decadence of Catholic theology at the opening of modern times is largely a figment of the imagination; at least it has been grossly exaggerated.

On page 207 Fr. Bouyer makes a statement about Our Lady that is either a faulty translation, a lapse of the pen, or croneous. "To say that Mary is holy, with a super-eminent holiness, in virtue of a divine intervention *previous to the first instant of her existence* is to affirm in her case as absolutely as possible that salvation is a grace, and purely a grace, of God." The objectionable words are those we have italicized. The Church teaches that Mary was preserved free from original sin and sanctified in the first instant of her existence, at the moment of conception, not "previous" to the first instant.

The most dangerous feature of Fr. Bouyer's book and most open to misunderstanding are the pages he devotes to the position of Sacred Scripture in the Catholic Church. The same can be said of the appendix contributed by Fr. G. De Broglie: "On the Primacy of the Argument from Scripture in Theology." In the book and in the appendix there is a straining (perhaps unconscious) to give a primacy to Scripture at the expense of



Divine Tradition and the Magisterium—the Teaching Authority of the Church. This is unfortunate for such a “primacy” cannot be sustained in view of the definite teaching of the Church.

However laudable may be the aim of the two authors, they run the risk of error in the subtle distinctions they make, and the language they use, in establishing the “primacy” of the Sacred Scriptures. In these passages the book is a dangerous book, misleading, to say the least, to the unwary reader—Catholic or Protestant—who fails to read these sections with clear knowledge of what the Catholic Church holds regarding the Magisterium, the Sacred Scriptures, and Divine Tradition.

The statements of Fr. Bouyer concerning the attitude of St. Thomas (and also of Duns Scotus) toward the Scriptures present an incomplete, if not erroneous, idea of the Saint’s position. The author is misled, I think, in failing to take into account the medieval theologian’s concept of “*auctoritas*”—an authority in theological argumentation. He speaks as follows of St. Thomas:

The scriptural books alone, in and by themselves, enjoy absolute authority, since the Christian faith rests entirely on the revelation made by God to the apostles, and before them to the prophets; it is handed down to us with the direct authority of God only in the canonical books. All other writers, including the doctors of the Church, can by themselves only be the basis of probable arguments. Arguments drawn from Scripture are alone by themselves conclusive. Therefore, the Bible alone provides the real foundations for sacred science. (p. 130)

He is summarizing the first question of the *Summa Theologiae*. In a footnote he also refers the reader to the *IV Contra Gentes*, c. 1 and *VII Quodlibet*, q. 6, aa. 1, 2, 3.

The important point in the first question of the *Summa* is that St. Thomas anchors theology in Revelation. Furthermore, in this question he is discussing theology as a science and not the relative positions of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. He does not explicitly mention Tradition in this question because he is practicing the science of theology according to the medieval technique that based itself on the “*auctoritas*.” (For a fuller discussion of these points, cf. G. Geenan, “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St. Thomas,” *The Thomist*, XV [1952], 110-35). “*Auctoritas*” for the medieval theologian was a text, a word, a formula, an adage of an author, but always a text. Tradition, therefore, by the nature of the case could not be an “*auctoritas*” in the medieval sense since Tradition is not a text. In medieval theological technique it was question of a written text, of the value recognized in it and the weight it carried due to the official recognition which the text possessed. Tradition as such (as an unwritten source of revealed truth) could not enter into a theological technique that was practiced with the written “*auctoritas*.”

But as a matter of fact, St. Thomas and other medieval theologians do have recourse to Tradition as a source of theological argument, i. e., as an "*auctoritas*" when it is enshrined in the form and the manner of a text. They do this by appealing to the written documents of the Teaching Authority of the Church, to the statements and teachings of popes and councils, to the statements of the Fathers and Doctors who have repeated and taught the doctrines of the Teaching Authority.

A competent examination of the writings of St. Thomas, the *Summa* and his other works, shows conclusively that he places Tradition on an equal plane with Scripture as a source of Revelation and of theology. Revealed truth is found according to him in Scripture and in "the Tradition of the Apostles," in the "Tradition of the Church," and is taught by the Universal Church. In the final analysis it is to the pope as head of the Church that we must have recourse in order to know what is revealed doctrine, for it is his teaching authority which is the authentic and definitive norm.

St. Thomas bases his sacramentary theology, his doctrine on original sin, his teaching on the Assumption of Mary, almost exclusively on the teachings of Tradition, since, as he notes, certain truths are taught us by the "hidden veils of words, that is, of the Holy Scripture and the 'Tradition of the hierarchies,' that is, of the other dogmas which the apostles and their disciples handed down, which are not contained in Holy Scriptures, as for instance those things which pertain to the rites of the sacred mysteries."

Briefly, the attitude of St. Thomas to Scripture and Tradition as found in his statements and procedures is as follows: Tradition has a real and indispensable place in theology as containing Revelation. It is on the same level and enjoys the same title to consideration as Sacred Scripture, i. e., as a source of Revelation. However, it enters theological argument indirectly because it is not a written text—an "*auctoritas*" in the medieval sense. It enters in the form and manner of a text, i. e., through the definitions of the solemn Magisterium or the teachings of the ordinary Magisterium of the Church. The argument from Tradition is bound up with that derived from Scripture. The both are so intimately connected that it is impossible to understand the one without appealing to the other. The text of Scripture is already an expression of Tradition since the meaning of Scripture, the truth expressed, is the very one which Tradition gives it through the dictates of the Teaching Authority of the Church. Sometimes through Tradition alone can we gain a true understanding of Scripture.

Following his statements concerning St. Thomas, Fr. Bouyer makes a summary in several sentences which demand comment. He says: "It is nonetheless true that no Catholic theologian worthy of the name, today any more than in the Middle Ages, would place any doctrinal authority on the level of Scripture." (p. 130) If by "authority" he means "*auctori-*

*tas*” in the medieval sense, there is some truth in his proposition, at least in reference to the medieval theologian. This is clear from what we have already said. However, this cannot be applied to the modern theologian. Both he and the medieval theologian place Tradition on an equal level with Sacred Scripture as a source of Revelation. As a doctrinal authority in the usual modern sense of the word, the Magisterium would rank first. Modern theology does not employ the medieval technique of argumentation, and the modern reader does not understand this technique nor the position of the “*auctoritas*.” Hence it seems misleading to speak as Fr. Bouyer does here, and as Fr. De Broglie does in his appendix.

The author follows immediately with another sentence that needs qualification:

If the authority of the Church be declared necessary to judge between the different interpretations of theologians, it is by no means because she claims for herself an authority superior to that of the Bible, but because her magisterium is necessary for our submission to Scripture, as well as hers, to be real as well as intended. The Church in her magisterium is the first to recognize that she is subject to the Word of God as contained in the Bible: She claims no more than to assure, by the ways chosen by God, the constant submission of the whole Church to this Word. (p. 130)

Of course the Church and her children must submit to the Scriptures. She and they are “subject to the Word of God as contained in the Bible,” in the sense that she cannot, in her teaching, contradict the Scriptures, must go to them as to *one of the sources* of Revelation, must depend on them *and on Tradition* as the source of all she believes and teaches. But the word “submission” in this context—when talking about the Magisterium and the sources of Revelation—is misleading because it is not sufficiently precise and runs counter to standard, theological terminology.

In addition, we must remark that the Church does claim for herself an authority superior to the Bible, inasmuch as she claims to be its guardian, its interpreter, its guarantor.

Fr. Bouyer also mars his presentation and reduces the role of Tradition, when he states that revealed truths contained only in Tradition “are not important as additions to the facts and truths contained in Scripture, but as maintaining these clear and precise in the living Church.” (p. 202) In the light of this proposition are we to believe that Fr. Bouyer holds that the veneration (not adoration) of images, the doctrine concerning original sin, the institution and essential rites of some of the sacraments, many points of Mariology (all points of doctrine not found in the Scriptures)) are unimportant additions to the Revelation contained in the Scriptures?

In reference to the Fathers and Doctors—while there is no doubt whatsoever that they entertained the highest veneration for the Scriptures, as

is well illustrated by the passage quoted by Fr. Bouyer from St. Augustine's 19th letter to St. Jerome—it is questionable whether they would subscribe to the affirmation (certainly they would not in an exclusive sense, reducing Tradition to a subordinate role) that he makes them share with the Protestant Reformers: "that the Bible and in one sense the Bible alone, is the 'Word of God' more directly and fully than any of its other expressions, since it alone is so inspired by God as to have him for its author." (p. 129)

Fr. Bouyer goes on to elaborate these ideas in two further passages that we shall quote at length:

This process of development [definitions of Councils and the work of theologians] has established once and for all the distinction between the inspiration of Scripture and the supernatural assistance granted to the magisterium in its various forms. Consequently, it is now absolutely clear, not only that Scripture is inspired, but that there is no other ecclesiastical document of which the same may be said, even a solemn definition of Pope or Council. Thus in the Catholic teaching of today, the truth appears more clear-cut than ever that the Bible *alone* [italics his] can be said to have God for its author. (p. 131)

. . . the Church, in her ordinary and extraordinary magisterium, is assured by the Spirit of never teaching anything not taught by the apostles. But none of the formulas, even the most solemn, in which she may convey or elucidate this teaching, is or will ever be strictly speaking the 'Word of God.' Only the inspired books of the two Testaments are that; that is why there is not, nor will there ever be, any definition (or still more, any ordinary teaching) of the Church which does not refer to these books of the 'Word of God,' in the strict sense, that is, the only word of whose existence God can be said to be the literal author. He is not the author, in this sense, even of the most solemn definitions of the Church, and he guarantees them, with the charisma of infallibility, only as guaranteeing their conformity, both in the letter and its meaning, with the Word given once for all by the apostles. (p. 203)

It seems to the reviewer that Fr. Bouyer confuses the issue by making distinctions where there is no fundamental difference. He also uses the word "author" too strictly. It is true that the Bible alone is a written word and that God alone is its sole principal author. In this sense we may say that the Bible is "unique of its kind" (p. 132) and has a "unique excellence." (p. 131) It alone is a written word, it alone is inspired, but it is not "unique" as the sole source of Revelation, nor does it have preeminence over Tradition. We might add, moreover, that Tradition also is "unique of its kind," i. e., it alone is a divinely guaranteed "unwritten source" of Revelation. In a broader sense, Tradition *also* has God for its author, since all the Revelation that Tradition contains comes from God as the sole principal source. Fr. Bouyer to be complete should have added to the above statements that the "word given once and for all by



the apostles" was not only a "written word" but also an "oral word," that the solemn definitions of the Church reduce this "oral word" to writing, that in the ultimate analysis this "oral word" thus enshrined in a solemn definition of the Church does not cease to be the "Word of God."

The decree of the Council of Trent "Concerning the Canonical Scriptures" (which Fr. Bouyer quotes only in part) is very illuminating on these points. We shall cite this important text at some length:

The (Gospel) of old promised through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, promulgated first with His own mouth, and then commanded it to be preached by His Apostles to every creature as the source at once of all saving truth and rules of conduct. It [the Council] also clearly perceives that these truths and rules are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand. Following, then, the examples of the orthodox Fathers, it receives and venerates with a feeling of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and New Testaments, since one God is the author of both; also the traditions, whether they relate to faith or to morals, as having been dictated either orally by Christ or by the Holy Ghost, are preserved in the Catholic Church in unbroken succession. (Session IV, April 8, 1546. Trans. from H. J. Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* [St. Louis, 1941], pp. 17.)

God is the author of the Holy Scriptures, but the Council also states that Tradition is "dictated either orally by Christ or by the Holy Ghost." One who dictates is also an author; the message he dictates emanates from him as from an author. There is ultimately between Scripture and Tradition, as far as their purpose to transmit Revelation is concerned, only the difference of medium chosen by God through which to communicate His truth.

Tradition, then, is in no wise subject to or inferior to Scripture. In fact, in a wide sense, it contains Scripture—the Old Testament, in determining which books constitute the canon; the New Testament, because originally only Tradition existed. The Gospel at first was communicated orally. Only after an interval of years were the inspired books of the New Testament written. Till then their doctrinal content was preserved and communicated orally. In effect, the Revelation of the Gospel, now contained partly in the books of Sacred Scripture and partly in Tradition, was originally contained only in Tradition. To reverse the metaphor of Fr. De Broglie (p. 233), Sacred Scripture gravitates around Tradition rather than (as he puts it) vice versa. More accurately, both Scripture and Tradition gravitate around the Magisterium of the Church, receive their guarantee, their interpretation, their clarification from it. Whenever the theologian

forces Scripture or Tradition out of their orbits, forces them beyond the gravitational pull of the Magisterium, he falls into error and heresy.

The weakness of this section of Fr. Bouyer's book is indicated further by the fact that he felt impelled to publish the supplementary note of Fr. De Broglie. He himself must have felt uneasy about what he had written concerning the Catholic position on Scripture and Tradition.

Unfortunately the note labors under a similar weakness. It sets up an imaginary opposition between Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium. Fr. De Broglie labors the point that an infallible pronouncement of the Magisterium is different from a text of Scripture. No one denies this. One is inspired; the other is guaranteed from error by a special divine assistance. Fr. De Broglie writes as follows:

True, the Church's teaching is divinely guaranteed to be free from error; none the less, it remains, in the various acts which constitute it, an aggregate of testimonies which are merely human, bearing on a past revelation made by God to men; whereas the sacred text presents us with a formal and direct testimony from God himself, in the very form in which it originally appeared. (p. 230)

This text demands comment. When we take into consideration the guidance of the Holy Ghost, which the Church always enjoys in the functioning of its ordinary and solemn Magisterium, can we say that "the Church's teaching is . . . in the various acts which constitute it an aggregate of testimonies which are merely human"? The guidance of the Holy Ghost lifts this teaching above the "merely human," even though human acts are involved in its study and definition. Tradition operating in the Church (in either the ordinary or the solemn Magisterium) is never "merely human." Also, in speaking of the sacred text of the Scriptures Fr. De Broglie passes over entirely the role of the human author. The human author is a complete instrumental cause of the whole sacred book that he writes. Here too, in the contribution of the inspired human author there is "an aggregate of testimonies which are merely human." Inspiration keeps the hagiographer from error, makes him write only what and all that God wishes, but still his are human acts. Hence in interpreting the sacred book, the purpose, the times, the person, and the personal idiosyncrasies of the sacred author must be kept in mind.

Fr. De Broglie, in speaking of the theologian's function to transmit the divine message in its entire purity, notes that

if Scripture is in fact the sole *immediate* [italics his] source at his disposal whence he can derive that message in the very words of the God who sent it, his primary concern must needs be to recur continually to that source to the fullest possible extent, and so to refer in the first place to the testimony of Scripture in preference to any other. (pp. 230-31)

The theologian certainly must recur continually to Sacred Scripture, but Tradition is also an *immediate* source whence he can derive the divine message, and some truths can only be derived from Tradition. That those derived from Scripture are in "the very words of God" is certainly matter for awe and reverence. The fact that Tradition does not record "the very words of God" is owing to the medium chosen. The essential thing, however, is the divine message; Tradition contains this equally with Scripture.

Concerning St. Thomas, it is not true that he always sees in "infallible ecclesiastical documents" "simply a *means of defence*" of dogma against heresies, or an *auxiliary* which makes more accessible to the unlearned the content of Scripture and Tradition." (pp. 231-32, italics his) For St. Thomas the Magisterium is intimately and indissolubly linked to Scripture and Tradition. It is indispensable because it alone has the exclusive right to give us an exact and authentic knowledge of what Scripture and Tradition teach. In the last analysis, for St. Thomas, it is to the pope as head of the universal Church that we must go in order to know what is revealed doctrine. His teaching authority is the authentic and definitive norm of faith for all theological argumentation.

In view of these attitudes of St. Thomas and of what we have said earlier, it is certainly erroneous to write that "the argument based on ecclesiastical documents (even infallible ones) cannot be considered by him as having a right, in theological 'science,' to a superior or an equal role to that of the argument from Scripture (even to that from Tradition)." (p. 232) As a matter of fact, whereas St. Thomas gives himself full liberty to criticize the statements of individual Fathers, Doctors, or theologians, he never criticizes the expressions of the Scriptures, the popes, or the councils. Indeed, he always considers them as being the best and therefore the sufficient expression of revealed truth. The pronouncements of the popes and councils (enshrining Tradition) are for him an "*auctoritas*" of equal value with the "*auctoritas*" drawn from Scripture.

Fr. De Broglie does a further disservice to his reader when he states that the theologian would fulfill his office:

in the best possible way by establishing all the 'defined' truths *without direct recourse to the argument drawn from the definitions themselves*. The 'definitions' lose none of their value by being considered by the theologian in the light of 'confirmations' which he could, strictly speaking, dispense with; on the contrary, that would be the best way to justify their existence, to arrive at their proper understanding, and to shed the clearest light on the study of the meaning and application of each. Seen from this standpoint 'infallible definitions' in no wise affect the primacy which the argument from Scripture enjoys and must retain in the science of theology. (p. 232, italics his)

As a suggested procedure for discussions with Protestants, no one would

quarrel with this technique, but Fr. De Broglie is proposing it as a technique of theological argumentation. The text in effect, if not in intent, puts the theologian and his interpretation of Sacred Scripture above the Teaching Authority of the Church, or at least, assigns the Magisterium a very subsidiary role which in no wise corresponds to its true importance. Its role is not merely negative as this procedure would make it. Rather it has primarily a positive function—it expounds and teaches Revelation; it guides and instructs the faithful. Even the theologian must first hearken to its voice before he begins his work. Fr. De Broglie's procedure is full of danger and is one which in so many times in past history has led its practitioners into heresy. The theologian is never capable of justifying the existence of "definitions." Their justification is found in the divine authority that the Church possesses. Certainly the spirit of this procedure does not harmonize with the decree of the Council of Trent which gives a primary role to the Magisterium:

Furthermore, to check unbridled spirits, it decrees that no one relying on his own judgment shall, in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, distorting the Holy Scriptures in accordance with his own conceptions, presume to interpret them contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge of their true sense and interpretation, has held and holds, or even contrary to the unanimous teaching of the Fathers, even though such interpretations should never at any time be published. (Session IV, Decree concerning the edition and use of the sacred books: trans. Schroeder, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19).

Fr. De Broglie also confuses issues when he uses the word "inspiration" in a loose sense: "However, the recognition of this primacy [of Scripture] should by no means lead to undervaluing the argument from Tradition and its necessity. For, unless we take a singularly narrow view of 'inspiration,' we are obliged to acknowledge that the apostles were not 'inspired' only when they took up the pen. Does not St. Paul assure us that his oral teaching, once given, is to prevail over any other?" (pp. 233-34) Fr. Bouyer, likewise, on page 202, uses the word in a loose sense when he speaks of "the 'inspiration' proper to the Apostles." The word "inspiration" and "inspired" in Catholic theology are used exclusively in their technical sense to refer to the precise type of divine assistance which was enjoyed by the writers of the Sacred Books and should not be applied, even in a loose sense, to the different type of assistance enjoyed by the apostles when they taught orally.

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*Man and His Happiness*, Theology Library, vol. III; *The Virtues and States of Life*, vol. IV. Ed. by A. M. HENRY, O.P. Chicago: Fides Publishers, 1956-1957. III, pp. 459. \$6.50. IV, pp. 790. \$8.75.

The present volumes are translations of the third section of the series *Initiation Théologique*, published in 1952 by a group of French Dominican theologians under the direction of Fr. A. M. Henry. They are the third and fourth volumes of the English translation, under the title: *Theology Library*, directed by Rev. Louis Putz, C.S.C. of the University of Notre Dame. The volumes deal with the entire matter of the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas, and are thus concerned with moral theology in its entirety.

In attempting a review of such a work one must discuss several aspects of the volumes. First of all, the purpose and organization of the books; secondly, their translation; and above all, their content and presentation. The French original aimed at presenting the thought of St. Thomas in a way attractive to the intelligent, well-informed Catholic adult. As we shall have occasion to note in some detail, the volumes present the work of many different authors, so that the reader is struck by the differences in approach of the various collaborators. In some sections one finds a fairly direct resumé of the *Summa* itself with little particular reference to modern thought or to the developments in scriptural and patristic theology. Other sections owe much to modern biblical investigations, with the doctrine of St. Thomas being presented as a scientific form of the revealed data. The success with which this confrontation of Scripture and Thomistic thought is carried out varies greatly in different parts of the volumes. Other sections seek to effect a rapprochement between St. Thomas and modern thought and attitudes, or better, to restate Thomistic concepts in terms and notion which are current to-day. This diversity of approach damages the unity of the whole work and may well leave the reader rather confused. It seems that the editor of the series, Fr. Henry, sought to keep a thread of unity in clear view by appending to each chapter a brief section entitled "Reflections and Perspectives." These sections seek to emphasize points made in the chapters, or to open up for the readers' consideration new avenues of thought not contained expressly in the chapters. In most cases they go beyond a mere summary and one wonders if they should not have been incorporated into the chapters themselves or else omitted. The reader has the impression that Fr. Henry is trying to make up for the omission of some points he feels should have been discussed in the articles themselves. The general tendency of these "Reflections" is to point out applications of Thomistic thought in the modern world. In those articles in which the author himself has sought to do the same thing, the added sections are not always helpful.

The difficulties which have been mentioned are natural, perhaps, to any work of collaboration, yet the reader cannot help but have a variety of reactions to the diverse points of view. We must applaud, however, the purposes behind the volumes, and, in great measure, the successful achievement of this purpose. To present St. Thomas to the modern reader without watering-down his thought is no easy task. To go further and, by taking cognizance of new movements in the theological world, to attempt a rapprochement of Thomistic theology with modern scientific thought and modern biblical scholarship is a far more difficult matter. The editor and various authors are to be commended for undertaking so ambitious a program. It is one which is sorely needed in Catholic theological writing, especially in moral theology. The usual method of studying St. Thomas, or Thomistic thought as presented in manuals, pays little attention to the great advances in biblical study made by modern exegetical science. The presentation often fails to move the minds of modern students because of a failure to be aware sufficiently of modern approaches or scientific advances. The present volumes represent a surprisingly successful attempt to remedy these defects.

We cannot, however, be totally condemnatory in the face of such real achievement, although we may hope that the defects of this attempt will urge others to contribute to a more living theology. The way to do this is pointed out in these volumes. It involves two "directions": one, the more fruitful and scientific contact with Scripture and tradition from which no theologian can divorce himself with impunity; the second is the enrichment of theology, especially moral theology, by a sound grasp of modern work in the behavioral sciences and the application of theological principles to urgent problems of modern life. If this series had no other value, it would be a great contribution, because it does seek to follow these "directions" while remaining faithful to Thomistic doctrine, so often upheld by the Magisterium as the basis of a genuine synthesis.

Another observation on the organization of the volumes may be made here. Each section ends with a good bibliography which usually does not merely list books and articles but comments on their value and merit. For some unknown reason the translators have seen fit to leave these in French, so that the English reader is deprived of their value. Even more strange is the addition of a new bibliography section which lists works in English without comment. The French bibliographies have the great advantage of listing works which really harmonize with the chapters, while the English constantly refers to volumes which have totally different and often contrary points of view.

It would not be out of place to note that the present two volumes in English represent one volume in French. The combined English price is \$15.25, while the French volume sells for about \$7.00. We know, of course,

the high price of printing in this country, but it does seem that some more successful efforts could have been made to keep down the price of this series. The printing costs in France are almost as high as ours at the present. It is unfortunate that so many fine European books, especially Catholic works, are so highly priced in the United States. The common practice of expanding a one volume original into several translated volumes seems somewhat unnecessary.

Finally, the English translators consider these volumes as suitable for use in theology courses in Catholic colleges. It seems that it would be difficult to employ them as texts for that purpose. First of all, many articles are just too difficult for the usual college student. Secondly, the divergence of viewpoint on the part of the authors would be more confusing to students than to others. However, the books would be most useful as necessary collateral reading. This reviewer has found them of great value as required supplementary reading to the *Summa* in a seminary course in moral theology. With the proper group and leader, the volumes should prove useful to lay, adult study-groups which have sufficient determination and background to study them with the concentration and understanding demanded.

Our second point concerns the quality of the translation itself. The best that one could say is that the English in general is adequate as a rendering of the original. It rarely rises to the fine style and lucidity of many of the French articles. Unfortunately, it is often banal and not at all infrequently, it is inaccurate. Space does not allow for a very detailed discussion of the constant flaws of translation, yet a few typical examples may be given. Vol. III, on p. 154, "Friendly conversation" is given as a translation of "commerce de l'amitié"—a much broader and more realistic phrase. On p. 167, in the last paragraph one reads: "The union of the lover and the beloved is at once the cause of love; love itself is its effect." This is quite different from: "L'union de l'aimant et de l'aimé est à la fois la cause de l'amour, l'amour lui-même et son effet" (French ed., p. 213), which is a true statement of St. Thomas. Similar examples are often found in the volume. If anything, Volume IV is worse, with many more errors and frequently with the quality of a high-school boy's work based on an over-confident and too literal use of a poor dictionary. The resulting "English" is often difficult, and the English itself poor. On p. 266 one reads about the "just deed in reduction and in similitude"—an unhappily literal rendering. The tract on Justice refers constantly to "the just," or "the legal just" (p. 300) instead of to the just act, mean, ideal or whatever. There is no need to use the word "just" as a substantive in these cases. Paragraph two on p. 280 states: "We see that we are far from the acceptable definition . . . of Ulpian," with "acceptable" translating *accueillante!* Such faults of translation are even more apparent

to one acquainted with the original. They force the reader to refer to the French constantly to see if the English actually renders the author's meaning. It may be hoped that a new edition will remedy some of these defects which seriously impair the value and readability of the English.

Of greatest importance is the discussion of the actual matter and content of the volumes. It will be necessary to limit this to some of the more important aspects for a detailed critique would become another volume. The reader may keep in mind the divergence of points of view of the authors of the different chapters for this greatly affects the presentation of the material.

The third volume, corresponding exactly to the *Prima Secundae*, begins with an excellent preface by P. Chenu which outlines the mentality which St. Thomas brought to a study of the moral life. The scientific aim of Thomas is mentioned, but above all it is the unity of the *Summa*, the unity of "dogma" and "moral" that Chenu emphasizes. This point is carried over and developed in what is perhaps the finest and most important single article in the volume: the Introduction by P. Jean Tonneau on the relation of morality and theology in St. Thomas. The eminent moralist and theologian speaks of the place accorded to moral considerations in the *Summa*, and shows how truly *theological* is the entire *Secunda Pars*. The first section of the article is a profound commentary on the Prologue to the *Prima Secundae* which modern manualists have pretty well forgotten. Not only is the *Summa* organized around the Dionysian theme of the going-out from God and return to Him, but the precisely theological consideration of man's return to God is that of man and his life seen as the development of the image and likeness of God. The theology of the "image" becomes the foundation for the study of morality, and methodologically is the way by which St. Thomas preserves the *specific* unity of theology as a study of God. P. Roger, O. M. I. in a recent work (*Béatitude et Théologie Morale chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Ottawa, 1956) notes especially the different treatment of morality by St. Thomas in the *Contra Gentiles* and in the *Summa*. The former is wholly "theological," the latter more strictly "moral." Père Guindon feels that Tonneau has over-emphasized the "theological" aspect of the *Secunda Pars* (pp. 272 ff.). This could be a just criticism, but really does not seem to apply, particularly when one realizes that the article of Tonneau is inspired directly from St. Thomas' own Prologue. The strictly "moral" outlook is hardly neglected by Tonneau who constantly refers to the precisely moral work of St. Thomas.

Of even more importance to-day is the second part of Tonneau's introduction which discusses the originality of Thomistic moral theory. Tonneau, together with such other noted theologians as Frs. Sertillanges and Deman, is particularly concerned with the meaning and outlook of moral theology



in contrast to that form of the science developed since the 16th Century. He comes quickly to the point by showing how different is the Thomistic system from the modern view of the moral life as a conflict between freedom and obligation, with its over-emphasis on liberty, conscience, the restrictive aspect of law, and its failure to see moral life as a pursuit of the good under the rule of reason. Tonneau's position is similar to that of the late P. Deman in his well-known studies on "Probabilisme" (in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*) and "Prudence" (*Editions de la Revue des Jeunes*—French edition of the *Summa*), but more it is the outlook of St. Thomas himself. The author goes to special pains to make clear the mentality which give rise to the modern view, as well as to stress the advantages of Thomistic thought. Of all the parts of theology, moral has been the most separated from a Thomistic inspiration. We can hardly imagine going to a manual of moral theology for guidance in our Christian life except for particular points, for resolving doubts centering on freedom and obligation. The idea of the will as a power of pursuing the good which is manifested by reason and pointed out by law is alien to the moral theology of to-day—a theology allied to the age of casuistry which gave rise to the moral "systems." The over-emphasis on obligation and conscience stems from the misunderstanding of law and the forgetfulness of prudence. The view of the moral life as a struggle between unfettered liberty and restrictive obligations is philosophically immature, and Tonneau points out, as he has done for years, that this is hardly the position of St. Thomas. His analysis of the present mentality stresses its "sociological" origins and brings out the "unexamined" nature of its assumptions. The reader will find in P. Deman's article, "Probabilisme" (*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*), an outline of the historical origins of modern "moral theology."

This introduction has been given special consideration because it is not only necessary and valuable for its own sake but needed for a proper understanding of the rest of the volume which retains both the full Thomistic inspiration as well as the structure of the *Summa*. The Thomistic notion of moral theology and its contrast to the more modern outlook cannot be appreciated without a thorough reading of this introductory article.

Fr. Spicq, O. P., the noted biblical scholar, gives us next an outline of the great themes of New Testament morality which is of particular value because of the neglect of any scriptural basis in our manuals. The author does not attempt to relate explicitly the exposition of the New Testament with St. Thomas but the reader will be able to do this with more intelligent insight after studying this article. Spicq ends his discussion with a few fine paragraphs on the relation of biblical to speculative theology. The reader can be referred to his Commentary on Hebrews for a fuller discussion of this point.

In keeping with the plan of following the arrangement of the *Summa*, the first chapter deals with "Happiness," or better translated, "Beatitude." It is good to see some reference—necessarily brief, to the Old Testament—in the adequate scriptural introduction. The second section is really a modernized commentary on the first two questions of the *Prima Secundae*, especially on the second. Modern writers are introduced in a dialogue somewhat resembling the excellent work of P. André Marc, S.J., *La Dialectique de l'agir* (Paris, 1949). The third section comments on the third to sixth questions and completes the theology of beatitude. The only criticism of this section is that insufficient attention has been given to the basic place of finality and its nature in the moral life and in St. Thomas' tract on beatitude. This leads to somewhat of an over-emphasis on subjective (formal) rather than objective (material) beatitude. The fact that the pursuit of the good—the end, good in itself—is the key to the moral life does not receive enough emphasis, especially as related to the pursuit of happiness. In fact, the title of the English translation, "Man and His Happiness," is rather unfortunate from this point of view.

The second chapter deals with human acts (Questions 7-17) and their mortality (Questions 18-21). The analysis of human acts was written before the final stages of the recent discussion involving Frs. Deman, O. P., Gauthier, O. P., Pinckaers, O. P., and Lottin, O. S. B., and will need revision in the light of this controversy. The discussion of the morality of human acts is not as clear as could be, and should be related more closely to Tonneau's introduction. These questions of St. Thomas have always been considered extremely difficult. It is not easy to establish clearly the meaning of "right reason," especially in light of the many controversies on this point. The nature of practical truth, involving its relation to speculative truth is a particularly difficult concept especially for those raised in the spirit of casuistry. These notions call for more emphasis and clearer explanation than they receive in this chapter. A welcome omission is that of the varieties of conscience, its nature and types, and of the whole question of the moral "systems." The Thomistic theory takes care of the practical direction of life by a union of charity and prudence.

The well-known writer, P. Plé, O. P. contributes a good chapter on the emotions (a better word than "passions" for the English reader). Two points are of special value. First is the attempt to indicate the need for enriching our knowledge of human emotional life by recourse to the sound findings of modern dynamic psychology. It is too much to ask that a full synthesis be given—that is not yet possible. What is to be encouraged is a willingness on the part of the theologian to rewrite, or at least to enlighten the treatment on the emotions by reference to modern behavioral science. The present article indicates some ways of doing this, pointing

out problems and possibilities. While quite tentative, it is certainly more valuable than the rather silly and out-dated discussions found in many manuals.

Secondly, the article has the value of presenting the emotional reactions themselves as possessing moral goodness or evil. Usually the emotions are treated of only as antecedent or consequent to a free decision. If, however, as Tonneau pointed out in the introduction ("the voluntary act has all that is necessary to be moral" p. xxx), St. Thomas stresses the voluntary and not the free, it can be seen clearly that the emotions themselves, insofar as they are voluntary, enter *ipso facto* into the moral order. This is quite in keeping, too, with the neglected Thomistic doctrine on the "sin of sensuality." The references on p. 158 to *III Sent.* d. 23, q. 1, a. 1, c., and on p. 161 to *de Verit.*, q. 27, a. 6 are not apposite.

The one defect in this discussion is the lack of a treatment, however brief, of the relations of the "super-ego" with its unconscious "morality" and right reason. The emotional development of the human being involves the acceptance of moral standards and preferences, of patterns of behavior quite unknown to the individual. These remain to affect his human activity and must then be considered in relation to the fully rational standards of moral theology. This is connected with a failure to emphasize the place of the emotions—not so much in reference to a particular human act—as to the integral development of human life and personality. The Thomistic moral theology is—to overstate the case—less interested in particular acts than in the full growth of the moral life by a cultivation of virtues. The role of the emotions and of the unconscious dynamisms of human nature should be seen in this general context.

It is clear that the next two chapters on Virtue and Sin are essential to an understanding of the integral moral life. The chapters are well done and follow quite closely the divisions of these tracts in the *Prima Secundae*. No special effort is made to relate the Thomistic doctrine to a full biblical background or to modern thought. In this sense, the chapters are what we expect, viz., clear and intelligent summaries of the *Summa*. Future writers can enrich these chapters especially by solid biblical introductions. Nowhere more than in the discussion of the moral and theological virtues can the reader get a clearer picture of St. Thomas' view of the continual development and growth of the whole person which is the Christian life. The attitude which is adopted in regard to the tract on sin is also of particular help to-day, when we so naturally tend to consider individual acts of evil rather than examine the sources of evil and its roots in our human nature. The real understanding of the nature of sin and of vice is certainly required for a rational pursuit of the good. These chapters will be of real assistance in developing a power of moral insight and judgment. They will enable the reader to see the difference between a good

or sinful act in itself, and the same act proceeding from virtue or vice. The chapter on sin is noteworthy for recalling the Thomistic teaching on the sin of sensuality which is so rich in psychological meaning and so revealing of the notion St. Thomas had on the voluntary and on the moral life as a whole. The distinction between mortal and venial sin is well presented, but there is no discussion of the "imperfection," but this is understandable since St. Thomas did not have room for an imperfection in the true sense which was not a venial sin.

The chapter on law is one in the series which gives quite a complete scriptural introduction, as well as a very brief indication on the contribution of ancient thought to the Thomistic synthesis. Especially valuable is the summary of Old Testament doctrine. For the New Testament, we could say that the exposition of St. Paul's teaching does not bring out as clearly as might be the great apostle's conviction that the Christian is free not only from the prescriptions of the Mosaic law but from any law except that of the Spirit. The whole orientation or attitude of the Christian is quite different from those who see "law" as an external constraint. St. Thomas, both in the *Summa* and in the Commentaries on the Epistles, is so close to the Pauline inspiration that we regret not seeing the full force of Paul's position (cf. S. Lyonnet, S. J., "Liberté chrétienne et loi de l'Esprit," in *Christus*, n. 4, Paris).

The rest of the chapter is excellent and reinstates the fascinating study of the Old and New Laws to which St. Thomas devoted much attention, but which modern manuals pass over completely in their more legalistic, less theological approach. The delicate matter of the natural law and its real meaning is not quite as well done as could be hoped for. This is especially true of the explanation of the principle of seeking good and avoiding evil. The author correctly points out that from this principle the theologian does not deduce anything, but only applies it, just as the metaphysician does with the principle of non-contradiction. However, he does give as much attention to a real penetration of the meaning of this first practical principle as is required. The analysis of this principle is as fruitful for morals as is the analysis of the principle of non-contradiction for the metaphysician. Some indication of how this principle is arrived at, some discussion of its elementary and basic meaning, would be most helpful even for the audience to which this volume is addressed. The main point would be to stress the idea that the principle concerns the rational pursuit of the good and that it is not first and foremost a statement of moral obligation.

The tract on grace can receive only brief mention. First of all, let the moral theologian rejoice that a book of moral theology even discusses the subject. The modern tendency to take grace away from its proper setting not only injures the tract on grace but removes from the study of the



Christian life the examination of its very principle. There is a good scriptural introduction; this is followed by a section entitled "conciliary data." The English adjective to describe a council is "conciliar," and the adjective here used is not to be found even in large dictionaries. In any case, the section is too brief to do justice to the development of the doctrine of grace in these expressions of the extraordinary magisterium. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the chapter is the section "Grace outside of the treatise on Grace." This recalls the aspects of grace, in its various meanings, which are properly discussed in "dogma." In the discussion as to where to place the tract on grace, the plan followed here seems to be helpful. The moralist is primarily concerned with grace "as assistance," and all that concerns grace in this context should be an integral part of moral theology. Grace in other contexts will be treated in the appropriate places. Thus, the modern question of the "assimilation" to the divine Persons may well be discussed in the treatise on appropriations in the Trinity. Some aspects of the problem of grace and predestination could be treated in regard to the divine nature. In any case, the study of the Christian life cannot be complete without this tract, and it is gratifying to see it restored to the position given to it in the *Prima Secundae*.

Volume Four is entitled *Virtues and the States of Life*, which covers the material of the *Secunda Secundae*. The three first chapters cover more than two hundred pages and are devoted to the three theological virtues. This again is a great delight to the Thomist who is accustomed to seeing these essentially moral treatises discussed with grace in "dogma," with the moralist being content to discuss the positive precepts and sins against these virtues in the usual legalistic and casuistic sense. Each of the three essays in its own way seeks to give a full picture of the place of each of the virtues in the entire Christian life. Much attention is given to the biblical development and to the modern, even phenomenological, approaches. More than in the other sections, these three essays represent personal syntheses by the authors (charity and hope are by the same writer). The treatise on faith, for example, opens with a discussion of the commitment to God which is involved in any true adherence to the "*Veritas Prima*." There follows a good exposition of signs and miracles as leading to faith, the psychological conditions of faith, and the development of the life of faith. The actual discussion of the essence of theological faith is too limited, but the reader has had the advantage of seeing the role of faith, and of understanding that the faith must ever grow in the depth of its influence on the Christian life.

The chapter on hope gives one of the best summaries of biblical doctrine to be found in the entire series. In addition to this, the author, P. Olivier, brings out the relation, often puzzling to students of St. Thomas, of the emotion of hope (which belongs to the irascible appetite) and the theo-

logical virtue of hope. Furthermore, the existentialist thought of Marcel is used to give the treatise a new meaning for the modern world. Olivier speaks of horizontal hope, emphasizing the biblical eschatological expectation of the Kingdom, and of vertical hope, reaching directly upwards to the omnipotent God. The exposition of the Thomistic theology of hope is full and clear. It seems, however, that the author over-emphasizes the self-centered, "interested" aspect of the love which hope involves. True, hope is not charity, and does include desire. Yet, though we cannot discuss this fully, it does not seem correct to make hope purely and simply a matter of the love of concupiscence, for God would only be an "intermediate" object sought for the good of the human person himself. Such a traditional Thomist as Cardinal Gotti protested against this one-sided view of hope.

The most important virtue, that on which the entire Christian life depends, is charity. The constant vitalizing influence of charity, its place at the center of the Christian life as the form of all the virtues is not sufficiently developed in most manuals. The fine chapter on charity by P. Olivier presents an excellent exposition of Christian doctrine on this virtue. The first part contains a fine summary of revealed truth as found in the Old and New Testaments. The exposition could be changed in minor details as a result of more recent studies, but the author has wisely chosen the method of word-study so fruitfully employed by P. Spicq. The exposition is clear, benefitting from modern exegesis, and takes into account such important modern works as that of Anders Nygren on *Agape and Eros*. The Synoptics, Sts. Paul and John receive special treatment which is detailed enough to give a truly adequate picture of biblical teaching. This is followed by a good, if rather too brief, summary of Patristic thought. Clement of Alexandria's union of *agape* and *gnosis* is mentioned, and several paragraphs are devoted to St. Augustine. The advantage of such a section is largely to indicate what a rich source of doctrine is contained in the Fathers, and how necessary it is for the theologian to become acquainted with their teaching. The follower of St. Thomas knows that the master cannot be studied *in vacuo*: St. Thomas was as much the intelligent recipient of a tradition as he was the bold innovator in thought and method. One may look forward to the day when the biblical and historical treatment of such theological topics as Charity, or the Trinity, or Grace are integral parts of the theological course itself. The advantages of such a method can be guessed by such articles as the present one.

The third part quite logically takes up the theology of charity as found in the *Secunda Secundae*. The author summarizes the previous work of P. Simonin. To this, to-day, we must add the excellent little volume by P. L.-B. Geiger, O.P. (*Le problème de l'amour chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris-Montréal, 1952). The advantage of Olivier's treatment is to relate

St. Thomas more closely to his biblical sources, while not forgetting the influence of Aristotle and Cicero in their analyses of friendship. A section on the pagan background would be useful for a fuller understanding of the Thomistic synthesis.

The great purpose of these volumes is to present the moral life in all its richness as examined by St. Thomas. This chapter is one of the most important for charity is *the* virtue of the Christian. The author constantly emphasizes the role of charity in regard to the other virtues, both theological and moral, and rightly gives to charity the positive preeminence which is its due. This is one of the very few "textbooks" of moral theology in which we find the theological virtues receiving their proper attention. It is of far greater importance for an understanding of the Christian life to know the theological virtues than all the casuistic details of contracts and the minutest problems of the sexual life. The chapters devoted to these virtues deserve the highest praise, for a moral theology in which they are not prominent is little more than natural ethics. As minor questions, we may raise some doubts as to the author's explanation of charity as the form of the virtues. (pp. 174 ff.) Historically we know that in the *Secunda Secundae*, St. Thomas reversed his earlier position on the exemplary causality of charity, to insist on its efficient causality (II-II, q. 23, a. ad 1). Also, it is unfortunate that two problems relating to charity are treated in the section of "reflections" rather than in the body of the discussion. The first of these is the problem of disinterested and interested love. The answer to this question seems to lie more in the direction outlined by Geiger, based on the rational guidance and element of love, than in its "ecstatic" character. (p. 196) The second problem is more clearly practical, and is left without real solution. What place do human friendships have in the life of charity? Very briefly, one could say that Christian tradition offers different answers in practice: witness the contrast on this question between the Desert Fathers, St. John of the Cross and such saints as Bernard and Aelred. The discussion of charity in St. Thomas could certainly offer some light on this problem which has so many practical applications.

The chapter on prudence introduces the discussion on the moral virtues. Prudence, for St. Thomas, is the virtue which, when "informed" by faith and charity, guides the entire human life in its active manifestations. The importance and position of this virtue are quite lost in modern manuals, and therefore we look eagerly to such a work as the present one to provide a full discussion of the role of prudence. The chapter is a competent summary of the treatise in the *Summa*, with a very brief biblical introduction. It is particularly regrettable that the chapter does not contain a real treatment of several important points. First of these is the nature of practical truth, with particular attention given to the reason for the in-

fallibility of prudence as opposed to conscience in the direction of action. Less important is the omission of any explicit confrontation of the analysis of the acts of prudence with the analysis of the structure of the human act in the *Prima Secundae*. Above all, however, there should be a full discussion of the relations of prudence and conscience; or, at least, a fuller explanation of the role of prudence throughout the moral life. The modern reader is not prepared to accept the de-emphasis of conscience without understanding how prudence can be expected to guide moral activity infallibly and effectively.

P. Tonneau makes another fine contribution in the chapter on justice. It is one of the most difficult sections in the volume, but remains profoundly Thomistic in the penetrating analyses of right and justice and judgment. Tonneau explains the key notions of justice in a manner not often found in such volumes, but study will be repaid by a real penetration into the meaning of the essence and structure of the virtue of justice. We may note, as one point among many, the discussion of general or legal justice in which Tonneau gives an explanation which is not the common interpretation of this form of justice. The section depends on a proper understanding of that very difficult and complex notion: the "common good." The reader may be surprised to find that general justice, concerned with the common good, is not the social justice of modern writers but a quite different thing. It is perhaps unfortunate that Tonneau, with his vast knowledge of sociology, did not see fit to include some discussion of the moral issues involved in modern society. Yet he has given us a new insight into the meaning of St. Thomas especially as this concerns general or legal justice. We may call attention also to the author's proper emphasis on the duty of restitution as applying to all forms of justice, and to the explanation of the gravity of all forms of injustice. Of note also is the fine exposition of the questions in which St. Thomas deals with the act of judgment as the act proper to justice. There is an excellent section on rash judgment in its sources and consequences.

The chapter on religion by P. Mennessier is clear and solid. There is, unfortunately, no exposition of biblical doctrine. Such a section would have helped to gainsay the not-uncommon notion that St. Thomas failed to recognize the proper preeminence of religion among the moral virtues. This point is adequately dealt with in the first paragraphs, but a substantiation of the Thomistic position in light of biblical study would have been helpful. This chapter is followed by another welcome "innovation" from the point of view of modern moral theology: a full discussion of the social virtues annexed to justice. For one who has given serious thought to the moral implications of our daily dealings with other human beings this chapter cannot fail to be of real interest. For the reader who would like to



observe St. Thomas' "humanism" in its most practical application this chapter will be most enjoyable.

The chapter on fortitude is written by A. Gauthier, whose superb work on magnanimity (*Magnanimité, L'idéal de la grandeur dans la philosophie païenne et dans la théologie chrétienne*, Paris, 1951) has been universally acclaimed. That volume is summarized here. It is a remarkable study of the history and development of a concept originally Greek, but completely taken over and elevated by Christian tradition, and finding its full development in St. Thomas, who did not hesitate to uphold the seeming paradox of a life uniting the virtues of magnanimity and humility. Gauthier presents us here with a fine historical introduction, the only one in the volume which gives full expositions of both the pagan and the Christian traditions together with an account of their harmonious union. This chapter is a fine example of the way in which sound historical study can enrich a notion and make much more profound and clear the teaching of St. Thomas. This has not always been done in these volumes even in chapters where a good biblical introduction has preceded the theological analysis. Here history sheds light on theological science, and theology unites and integrates the traditional concepts. The theological exposition of fortitude as a "theology of dynamism" is excellent, although it leaves out much of what St. Thomas discusses under the virtue of fortitude. Gauthier gives most attention to magnanimity, so that other aspects of fortitude (e. g., patience, except for the New Testament study) are not treated of. One could, perhaps, go further and suggest another integration which would complete the chapter. This would be to show the relation of the virtue of fortitude to the irascible appetite and its emotional reactions especially as studied and known in modern psychology. We might also suggest that this chapter would be a good place to give explicit attention to man's facing of the problem of evil and suffering. Some of this latter is attempted in the "Reflections" following the chapter, but as with other such sections, the matter would be integrated into the body of the discussion itself. The chapter is generally excellent and will be a fine model for study, as well as a real revelation of the richness of Thomistic moral thought.

The discussion of temperance is well done and balanced, expressing theological principles in a way particularly suited to modern needs and mentality. The contrast with the previous chapter brings out the divergencies of approach to be found throughout these volumes. This chapter leaves out any consideration of the historical and biblical background which we found so valuable in the treatment of fortitude. The volume ends with several chapters covering the remaining sections of the *Secunda Secundae*: the charismata, the active and contemplative life, the states of life, and the life of perfection. This latter, by P. Mennessier, is well seen as the normal development of the Christian life, lived on the basis of the three

theological virtues. The author makes clear that the life of perfection is not reserved in its essence to the few but is the Christian life itself, lived fully in accord with the inspirations of grace.

We have spoken of the faults of these two volumes. These were: definite flaws in the English translation, and the lack of unity which is found in the original and is owing to the different points of view of the several authors. In spite of these difficulties, which need not be minimized, it would be false to say that this is the best series in English on moral theology. It could not be used alone as a regular textbook in the seminary or even less in the college, but it does give a generally excellent presentation of Thomistic moral thought. Its value is enhanced by the frequent attempts to make the two integrations we have mentioned: with biblical and historical sources and with modern science and mentality. It can provide a fine remedy for many notions unfortunately prevalent in modern moral manuals. The work is not complete, but the values it does offer are quite sufficient to give it a very high recommendation to priests, theologians and seminarians as well as to the lay person who is truly interested in serious theological learning. The volumes are excellent as required collateral reading on the college level and above.

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## BRIEF NOTICES

*Joseph Most Just.* By FRANCIS L. FILAS, S. J. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1956, Pp. 150. \$3.50.

At first sight it might seem that Fr. Filas has said just about all there is to say about Saint Joseph in his two previous books, *The Man Nearest to Christ* and *Joseph and Jesus*. But no; as a matter of fact, while he has added very much to our knowledge of St. Joseph, there still remains much more to be written in English about Our Lady's husband.

*Joseph Most Just* is a very orderly and concise discussion of some theological questions about St. Joseph. You might call it a busy theologian's guide to St. Joseph. The first chapter explains briefly four introductory notions about St. Joseph. First, the purpose of a study of St. Joseph is to determine his true status and thus to foster a greater devotion to him based on the knowledge of his dignity and holiness. Secondly, there is an explanation of the theological propriety of the terms "Josephite theology," "Josephology" and "theology of St. Joseph"; for such a study considers St. Joseph first in relation to Mary, secondly in his fatherly relationship to Jesus and then, by reason of the graces and privileges of this double vocation, his relationship to us. Thirdly, there is a brief treatment of the sources for Josephology: the Scriptures; the Fathers, admittedly a rather meager source in this matter; and papal documents, especially of the last century. Finally, Fr. Filas brings up what is perhaps the most serious difficulty in regard to devotion to St. Joseph: why did the Church neglect him so long in its public veneration? Various solutions have been proposed, based on a distinction between "cultus" and "devotion" or Newman's "doctrine" and "devotion." Perhaps the best reason is simply that it appears to have been the will of God that such devotion should be postponed until these latter days. This much can be said, at least, the Church herself never refused to honor St. Joseph.

Following these introductory notions, the major portion of the book is simply an exposition of the latter part of the statement in the encyclical *Quamquam Pluries* of Pope Leo XIII: "Blessed Joseph . . . was indeed the husband of Mary and father, as was supposed, of Jesus Christ. From this arise all his dignity, grace, holiness, and glory. . . . [The Church] is his numberless family . . . over which he rules with a sort of paternal authority, because he is the husband of Mary and the father of Jesus Christ." (Italics mine.) Fr. Filas does not give an extended treatment of St. Joseph's marriage and fatherhood, for these have been discussed in his previous works. He does, however, present the key notions necessary for

an understanding of the theological deductions which follow in the rest of the book.

In the theology of St. Joseph, Fr. Filas explains, conclusions are reached either by direct deductions or indirectly by means of arguments from analogy and fittingness. "Properly used, such logic can lead and does lead to reliable information. For example, with respect to the argument from analogy, we know of the existence of certain privileges of the saints. What belongs to the saints in general, must by a stronger reason—granting Joseph's exalted position—belong to St. Joseph. Yet this does not mean that all the *particular* privileges of all the saints will be attributed to the virgin father of Jesus. God bestows special graces suited to the needs of special apostolates, and Joseph was given all the helps he required. He might have lacked the special gift of miraculous preaching which the Apostles needed and received for their first tasks; but he must have been given in outstanding measure every *generic* gift which every saint would receive.

"By a converse use of this analogy we can also ask whether or not the sublime privileges of Mary belong to Joseph in a lesser degree. Many of the graces of Mary were granted to her specifically to help her in her parental task. Reasonably, then, God must have bestowed similar graces on Joseph because Joseph's task was also that of a parent. Joseph's fatherhood in the moral order is unique; hence, his graces like Mary's must also be unique. Nevertheless, in reasoning this way we must be most diligent lest any grace given exclusively to Mary would seem, by improper logic, to be shared with even so holy a man as Mary's husband." (p. 18) (*Italics his.*)

Or, if you wish, Fr. Filas draws it up in the form of a syllogism:

According to Holy Scripture and official documents of the Church, St. Joseph was chosen to be the virginal husband of our Lady, the virgin father of Jesus, the head of the Holy Family and the patron of the Universal Church. However, implicitly included in this vocation *because required by it* are various privileges and graces. (*Italics his.*) Hence, these privileges belong to St. Joseph. (p. 19)

St. Joseph has a very great dignity from several titles: husband of Mary, father of Jesus, head of the Holy Family and patron of the Universal Church. In dignity he is higher than the angels, higher than John the Baptist, and higher than the Apostles. Fr. Filas gives good reasons for all these. We might mention in passing that theologians are gradually coming to speak of Joseph simply as "father of Jesus," because there is not much danger now that such a term will be misunderstood among Catholics. Pope Leo used the term in the encyclical cited above, St. Ephrem called Joseph the "father of God."

The fact of his dignity implicitly indicates the holiness which St. Joseph's



position demanded, Fr. Filas notes that "the doctrine that St. Joseph surpasses all creatures except Mary in holiness is becoming more and more commonly accepted in the Church." (p. 41) The fundamental principle used here was laid down by St. Thomas with regard to the Blessed Virgin: "Those whom God chooses for an office, He prepares and disposes in such a way that they become suited to it" (*Summa Theol.*, III, q. 27, a. 4). It was St. Bernardine of Siena who is generally credited with applying this principle to St. Joseph, although historically Bernardine may have depended on Ubertino of Casale. Since most hold that St. Joseph pertains to the hypostatic union, another principle can be used here: "To the degree that something approaches its source, by so much does it more participate in the effect of that source. Christ is the source of grace" (*ibid.*, a. 5). Since Joseph is closest after Mary to Christ, he is therefore highest in holiness after Mary. Once the relation of holiness to dignity is established, this doctrine can be said to be confirmed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical: "There can be no doubt that more than any other person he approached that supereminent dignity by which the Mother of God is raised far above all created natures."

As for the privileges of St. Joseph, Fr. Filas readily admits that there exists very little explicit evidence. Here more than anywhere else we must depend on the principle of deducing the saint's prerogatives from the requirements of his office. This means that the answer to most of the questions to occur will have to be, "It is fitting," "It is only probable" or simply "We don't know." Of course, arguments of convenience do have a place in theology, as is well known. Fr. Filas presents reasonable answers to several of the most discussed privileges that have been claimed for St. Joseph. Was he immaculately conceived? No; this was the "singular privilege" of his wife. Was he sanctified in the womb? We don't know. Did he have freedom from sin and temptations of concupiscence? This would seem to be demanded by his dignity. Fr. Filas believes that "if we were to delay Joseph's freedom from actual inclination to sin, and, more so, if we were to delay Joseph's freedom from all sin until the time of his marriage to our Lady, we would be forced to admit the presence of a disgraceful fact [sic] in his youth—an element that seems to make him unworthy to become husband and father of the Holy Family." (p. 70) Finally, was Joseph assumed bodily into heaven. Again the true answer must be, we do not know. Fr. Filas can only conclude reasonably that it would appear that if anyone in addition to our Blessed Mother has ever been taken up into heaven in body and soul, that person would be her virginal husband.

In the chapter on the patronage of St. Joseph, Fr. Filas traces the historical development and explains the universality of the patronage. He believes that the title of Patron of the Universal Church is a happier choice

than Patron of the Catholic Church, because of the connotations of the terms.

St. Joseph's great dignity and holiness, once established, would seem logically to demand for him a more prominent place in the liturgy. In the last chapter Fr. Filas discusses the petitions for St. Joseph's advance in the liturgy. Since 1815 thousands of petitions have been sent to the Holy See by all ranks of clergy and faithful requesting increased honors for St. Joseph in the liturgy. In particular, they have asked that his name be invoked immediately after Mary's in the *Confiteor* and in three places in the canon of the Mass. There are many objections offered to such additions, and Fr. Filas exposes and answers them all. Especially strong seems to be the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1892 which indicated that the Holy See wished no changes; unfortunately most objectors seem to overlook the fact that the tenor of that document implies that it was merely not expedient at that time. A more hopeful sign is in the *Mediator Dei* of Pius XII. Here the Holy Father distinguishes in the liturgy the divine and human elements. The divine elements, instituted by God, cannot be changed in any way by man. The human components, however, do admit of modifications, "as the needs of the age, circumstances, and the good of souls may require, and as the ecclesiastical hierarchy under the guidance of the Holy Spirit may have authorized." The Pope cites as examples the spread of devotion to the Eucharist, the Passion, the Sacred Heart, "to the Virgin Mother of God, and to her most chaste spouse."

A first appendix traces summarily the development of devotion to St. Joseph during the past four hundred years. We can certainly pardon Fr. Filas for relating mostly the truly great work of the Jesuits in the various aspects of this development; Cardinal Lépicier did likewise for the Servites, and any religious should be expected to do the same for his own order.

A second brief appendix summarizes eight resolutions adopted at the session of studies at St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal in August 1955. Perhaps the most important for readers of this review are the second: "That a series of courses or a study club on questions pertaining to St. Joseph be introduced in all major seminaries and scholasticates, or at least that special mention be made of these problems in the treatise on Mariology"; and the third: "That theological, biblical, and Marian societies take greater interest in these questions concerning St. Joseph."

There is very little to criticize adversely in this book. In fact, it is to be heartily recommended to all theologians, professional and amateur. Preachers also should find it immensely helpful. To be sure, Thomists will be disappointed to read that God in His ineffable providence chose blessed Joseph to be the spouse of His most holy Mother because He foresaw Joseph's cooperation and bestowed on him the position in the Holy Family

(p. 25; similar interpretations pp. 46, 68). They will undoubtedly find greater consolation in the statement of Pope Pius IX that God "enriched him and filled him to overflowing with entirely unique graces in order that he might execute most faithfully the duties of so sublime a state." (p. 51)

Once again the interesting problem of Jesus' knowledge enters in passing. Fr. Filas says on p. 26: "The dignity of the Saint continues to appear from the fact that Jesus was subject to him. This means that Joseph taught Jesus much of the experimental knowledge Jesus deigned to learn in His human nature." It is to be hoped that soon some Josephologist will take up this problem and try to explain it a little more in detail. It has been neglected so far, and yet it is important not only for a better understanding of Jesus but also of Joseph.

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*Summa Theologiae.* By ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. Ottawa: Commissio Piana.  
5 Vols. Pp. 3960. Set \$24.00 (Canadian).

Any effort to make a good text of St. Thomas readily available and within reasonable financial reach is always welcome to students of the Common Doctor. The Canadian Piana Commission has given us the best text of the *Summa Theologiae* that can be obtained—outside of the Leonine text itself.

In editing the works of St. Thomas, in particular, the *Summa Theologiae*, the Leonine Commission chose the Piana edition (published by order of Pope St. Pius V in 1570) as the basis of comparison of codices. "... though the Piana is not the oldest edition, nor has it the corroboration of the manuscript tradition, nor is it free from interpolations, nevertheless it is indisputably the best of all the other editions and manuscripts" (Gundisalvus Grech, O.P., "The Leonine Edition of the Works of St. Thomas: its Origin, Method and Published Works," *From An Abundant Spring*, p. 228).

This *Piana Nova* does not claim to be a critical text in the sense uniquely enjoyed by the Leonine, but it does supply us with the traditionally best authentic text, improved, revised and augmented by the large number of specialists comprising the present commission. The modern edition of the Piana was first published between 1941-1946. The present new edition, with better paper and binding, has incorporated the revision and corrections in the text, notes and bibliography that a decade of use has brought to light.

The five volumes comprise 3,960 pages; the text itself is in two columns with numbered lines. A volume each is devoted to the traditional four-part

division of the *Summa*, with the fifth volume (not yet received) containing the *Supplement*. The Piana Commission has noted that every quotation by St. Thomas has been checked, and that unnamed authors referred to by St. Thomas and the unmarked quotations have been identified, except in a few instances. The clarity and preciseness of the footnote references in each question and article, especially regarding the Migne citations, are a valuable aid to those wishing to pursue the relevant positive theology. The bibliography of texts and studies introducing each volume are a unique contribution of the *Piana Nova*.

Students and professors who have used this manual *Summa* text have been pleased and rewarded, which is the best recommendation for any book. A newer and improved edition of the *Nova Piana* is therefore heartily applauded.

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*Diderot and Descartes: A Study of Scientific Naturalism in the Enlightenment.* By ARAM VARTANIAN. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. Pp. 336. \$6.00.

This erudite, but readable, work is not so much a study of either Descartes or Diderot as a chapter in the history of the idea that all things may be explained by means of matter and its properties, an idea that may be expressed as materialism or scientific naturalism. For us moderns, the crucial period in the development of this idea is that extending from 1650 to 1750, one that begins with Descartes and ends with Diderot. By about 1750 scientific naturalism in its modern form was being proposed by the more advanced among the group of the *Philosophes* of the French Enlightenment, such as Buffon, La Mettrie, D'Holbach, Maupertius, and especially Diderot. The latter has been selected as the more important and typical figure of this group "for it was in his thought that all the different phases and facets of the period's materialism found their most integrated and synthetic expression." (p. 303) The evolution of his own thought is an epitome of the history of materialism during the period under review. His early intellectual formation was cartesian (cf. pp. 40-43); he then came under the influence of English empiricism, especially that of Locke, and of Newtonian science and scientific method; finally, the cartesian influence, both as to doctrine and to method, became once more predominant in shaping his mature thought.

Historians have tended to exaggerate the influence of Lockean psychology and Newtonian science in the formation of the materialism of the French



Enlightenment. Mr. Vartanian recognises that Diderot's group drew, for their ideas, from many sources, such as Gassendi, Hobbes, Spinoza and, among the ancients, Epicurus and Lucretius. They adopted the sensualist and atomistic psychology of Locke, but this was precisely because they were materialists; and it is the thesis of Mr. Vartanian that their materialism was the direct result of the influence upon them of Descartes. They themselves did not speak of themselves, at least primarily, as Cartesians; and this fact may have deceived the historians. They did not wish to do so, because the official cartesian school continued to cultivate metaphysics, and to defend the innatism of ideas, and was used by the apologetes of religion. On the other hand, those in whom the influence of Locke and Newton was strongest, such as Voltaire and Condillac, were definitely opposed to the new scientific materialism. The cartesianism of Diderot and his companions may be called unofficial, even secretive, but Mr. Vartanian sets out to prove, and, I think, succeeds in doing so, that it is the more authentic expression of the spirit and aims of Descartes, at least in his natural philosophy.

The essential elements of Diderot's mature position are well summarized as: " (1) the decision to explain all phenomena, from the broadest cosmic outlines to the most intricate organic details, by ultimate reference to determinable laws of matter in motion; (2) the elimination of all vestiges of finalism, providential design, plastic natures, hylozoistic schemes, and other concepts adaptable to apologetic use, from the program of the investigator of nature; (3) the demand that the scientist give an account not merely of the operations, but of the origins as well, of the external order." (p. 291) The elements in the philosophy of Descartes that inspired these intentions were various. That his rationalism and his demand for mental clarity and simplicity should lead in that direction is evident. His cosmic dualism lifted matter from its lowly position in the aristotelean scheme of things to the status of an independent substance which could be the object of an autonomous science. The method of such a science, being mathematical, set a mechanistic ideal before the investigator of nature, who was encouraged to seek for explanations of natural events in terms solely of extension and local motion. This was to free scientific procedure from any dependence on metaphysics, and from any control by theology; and this was the aim that above all inspired Diderot and his group. Descartes had himself indicated the line of development that his philosophy of nature was later to take. In the "*Du Monde*" he had set himself the task of giving a mechanistic account of all natural events, and envisaged the possibility of giving a like explanation of the origins of the world. In the "*De l'Homme*," he proposed that man should be studied, like other animals, as mere automata, if a scientific psychology and physiology are to be possible.

The demonstration of the fact that there is a historical link between these

cartesian elements and the fully elaborated scientific naturalism of Diderot and the *Philosophes* is the main purpose of this book. To prove his thesis, the author draws on an amazing amount of material, writings from the period in question, some of them hitherto unpublished, as well as recent literature on the topic. The good bibliography (pp. 323-332) gives one an idea of the extensive reading necessary to produce such a well-documented book as this. Having stated his thesis and some of its difficulties in the first chapter, the author traces in the second chapter the persistence of the cartesian tradition both in those who defend it, such as Fontenelle and Bayle, and in those who, by opposing it, such as Cudworth, Ray, P. Daniel, bear witness to its continuance. The difference between the newtonian outlook and the cartesian is dealt with; the latter, by stressing the activity of nature, and the problem of development, fostered interest in cosmogony, geology and biology, and came to be accepted as the basis of the new scientific naturalism.

The influence of Descartes in regard to scientific method was as active on the *Philosophes* as his mechanistic interpretation of nature. The third chapter is an interesting account of the varying fortunes of the two main schools of thought in relation to scientific method, the cartesian and the newtonian, and of how Diderot came to champion Descartes against Newton, even though the cartesian vortex-physics had been abandoned. In chapter four, the object of discussion is the historical connection between the "Du Monde" and later naturalistic theories on the origin of the universe, and between the "De l'Homme" and the later vitalistic materialism. Various discoveries in biology gave a great impetus, about 1750, to pre-lamarckian theories of transformism, and fostered the growth of evolutionary materialism, again upon the basis of cartesian mechanism.

Mr. Vartanian, summing up the results of his investigations in his last chapter, maintains that the materialism of Diderot was not so much doctrinal as methodical; that his intention was not to deny spiritual reality or values, but to assert the legitimate authority of natural science which should assume, as determining its method, mechanism and materialism. This implied that any attempt of the metaphysician or theologian to control or dictate to the scientist should be resisted; and Mr. Vartanian has some hard things to say, in this connection, of the Church in France during this period as being the center of the forces of intolerance and bigotry, and as maintaining a rigid and authoritarian position. (cf. pp. 34-38) One may doubt, however, that Diderot's materialism was merely methodic; he seems to have been understood by his contemporaries as advocating a system that not merely abstracted from but denied the existence of God, of divine providence, and of a spiritual soul in man. On such questions, both the Church and philosophy have every right to intervene. A Church which claims to be supernatural must, of its nature, be authoritarian in matters

of faith; Descartes himself could be a faithful Catholic—though our author seems to doubt his sincerity (p. 34)—and yet claim independence for science in its own field; and he certainly intended to buttress his natural philosophy with a metaphysics that would justify his method and his mechanism. But it would be ungraceful to quarrel with Mr. Vartanian on a point that is not essential to his thesis, and which would lead one far afield. He has given us a work of thorough scholarship not only on Descartes and Diderot, but on the crucial period in the formation of the mental outlook of the modern European, and on the history of scientific method in relation to its underlying philosophic ideas. It is works such as this, in which extensive research and information are allied to a spirit of synthesis, that can contribute most to building up the history of ideas.

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*Existentialism and Religious Belief.* By DAVID E. ROBERTS. Edited by Roger Hazelton. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957. Pp. 352. \$5.00.

At the time of his death in 1955, Prof. David E. Roberts occupied the Marcellus Harte Chair of Philosophy of Religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York. This book was substantially completed at that time although, as the editor relates in his preface, it remained for him to put the "Introduction" into final form, to deal with one or two chapters that were not quite finished, and to write a concluding section. This last task was accomplished by re-working material written by Prof. Roberts for other purposes, but which could be brought to bear upon the theme of the present book.

The book contains an "Introduction" which lists four or five of the general characteristics of existentialism, and offers a brief comment on each; a chapter on Pascal; two chapters on Kierkegaard; a chapter each on Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers and Marcel, in that order; and an "In Conclusion" which offers a five-part answer to the question "what claim does existentialism rightfully exert upon religious people and what should be the character of our response to it?" (p. 333) The book has, in addition, all of the usual apparatus of scholarship—copious footnotes, a short bibliography of English-language general introductions to existentialism, and a useful Index.

Prof. Roberts did not interpret his title in any narrow sense, for this book offers a faithful and comprehensive introduction to existentialist

philosophy in all of its phases. The author was too conscientious a scholar to entertain the idea of isolating the religious, or anti-religious, positions of the existentialists from the context of their thought as a whole. He has, rather related the whole of existentialist thought to the Christian faith.

There is a surprisingly large number of scholarly introductions to existentialism in English, but this book seems to me the most satisfactory of those that I have read on four counts: 1) the exposition of the thought of each of these six men is masterful; 2) the author never merely reports, he recognizes the philosopher's duty to judge. Yet his judgments, while ever-generous, are also ever-balanced. He is his own man, he has his own center; 3) some of the individual insights are memorable, for example, the suggestion that, quite possibly, the prospect of apostasy was constantly present to Kierkegaard's mind all of his adult life (p. 139); 4) he knows how to write philosophy in English: how to be technical without being grim, and how to be vivid without being cheap. Here is a book in which an accomplished philosopher faithfully recreates existentialism in his own mind; in which a deeply faithful Christian evaluates that philosophy; in which an accomplished communicator reports the result of the faithful encounter in his own mind between existentialism and Christianity.

Inevitably, there are reservations, and I note three. 1) I am quite sure that a competent Catholic theologian would be forced to disagree with some of Prof. Robert's understanding of Christianity. 2) I am not convinced, after reading the book, that the inclusion of Pascal in a study of existentialism is anything more than an arbitrary whim. 3) There is one, and only one, lapse from the tone of generous and incisive scholarship, and that is a shrill paragraph attacking the "detractors" of Kierkegaard, some of whom are: "... rationalists, disciples of John Dewey, provers of God and immortality, pro-Freudians, anti-Freudians, Fundamentalists, the Pope, Boston personalists, behaviorists, Buchmanites, socialists, and capitalists." (p. 142) The paragraph is so hysterical as to be devoid of meaning, and therefore it needs no comment. The same care should be taken to delete it from future editions as to retain everything else.

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*Christ in Prophecy.* By PAUL HEINISCH. Translated by W. G. HEIDT, O.S.B. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1956. Pp. 290 with index. \$6.00.

During his long and fruitful career as an Old Testament exegete, Dr. Paul Heinisch won for himself an enviable reputation for sound, sober



scholarship. English readers became better acquainted with him through Fr. Heidt's translation of his *History of the Old Testament* (1952) and *Theology of the Old Testament* (1950). Both these works were well received and widely recommended. Fr. Heidt has now given us another excellent translation of a work published after the author's death and one which measures up to the high standards Dr. Heinisch set for himself during his long and distinguished scholarly life. The format of the book is pleasing, though this reviewer regrets that publication costs require so high a price on a book of not quite 300 pages.

In his introduction, Dr. Heinisch traces the attempts of man to wrest from the future its secrets. We learn that in times past the Babylonians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Greeks, Romans and Germans all tried their hand at penetrating the mist of the future. Modern man, of course, is no exception. In Israel there were those who imitated the practices of their Canaanite neighbors and their soothsayers, but the Law and the Prophets took a dim view of soothsayers and necromancy. (p. 10) On Sinai Yahweh had made a covenant with Israel. When it was necessary, Yahweh would reveal His will through divinely illumined men. How different was Israel's revealed religion from that of her pagan neighbors! What an amazing difference between Israel's prophets and the fortunetellers of antiquity and modern times! (p. 12) From the very beginning it was God's plan that Israel's religion become matured and deepened through a theology concerning her Messiah, and thus matured, to become the religion of mankind. (p. 16) This book is concerned with the Old Testament prophecies concerning the person or the work or the times of that Messiah.

Dr. Heinisch divides the body of his work as follows: *Prophecies Prior to the Eighth Century*; *The Pre-Exilian Literary Prophets*; *The Period of the Exile*; *Post-Exilian Messianic Prophecy*; *The Apocrypha and Christ*; *Prophetic Form and Fulfillment*; *Christ in Type*; *The Messiah's Mother*; *Biblical Messianism—A Unique Phenomenon*; *Non-Jewish Messianic Hopes*. There follows a short conclusion which considers the rejection of Him who fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament books.

Into this obviously chronological framework, the author fits his consideration of all the Messianic prophecies from Genesis 3: 14-15 to Daniel 9: 24-27. The treatment of each prophecy is fairly uniform: the text is set in its historical and literary context, various opinions as to its proper interpretation are presented, a choice is made and defended by the author. Dr. Heinisch very definitely is in the conservative tradition. His exegesis reflects what is best in the Catholic scholarship of the first quarter of the present century. In presenting in one volume all the commonly accepted Messianic prophecies (accepted as Messianic in one sense or another), he has done a great service to both theology and the study of Sacred

Scripture. In English we have had nothing at all since Fr. Maas' *Christ in Type and Prophecy* (1893-96). It is unfortunate that *Christ in Prophecy* suffers from one glaring defect: it is almost 20 years out of date. Biblical scholarship has come a long way during the past 20 years, especially in the study of Messianism. Its results are not often evident in this book. I would suggest that a future edition of the work contain references either to the current opinions worthy of consideration or to source material wherein the student may read for himself the more recent thought on the various prophecies.

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